

LA COMPAGNIE IRLANDAISE.

REMINISCENCES

OF THE

FRANCO - GERMAN WAR.

Mend Spine
DC
295.5
K5

By M. W. KIRWAN,

LATE CAPTAIN COMMANDING THE IRISH CONTINGENT DURING THE WAR
OF 1870-71; FORMERLY LIEUT. H. M. 44th ROYAL
GLAMORGANSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY.

1102 9353 01 CC



MONTREAL:

DAWSON BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.

1878.

152

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF PARLIAMENT OF CANADA, IN THE YEAR
1878, BY

DAWSON BROTHERS,
IN THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

PRINTED AT "THE GAZETTE" PRINTING HOUSE, MONTREAL.

HE YEAR

TO THE MEMORY
OF
THOSE IRISH SOLDIERS
WHO HAVE
FOUGHT AND FALLEN IN FOREIGN SERVICES
THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY

Dedicated
BY
THE AUTHOR.

fu
Jo
at
ha
th
sh
so
su
th
wh
ke
Ir
m
str
my
ge
is
ba
alr
sol
tiv
the

PREFACE.

THIS book pretends to have no merit but its truthfulness. It neither professes to be the labour of a Jomini nor the production of a Burgoyne. The author leaves all such attempts in abler and better hands. This book may, however, fill a gap in the history of the late war, by showing the hardships, the famine, and the wants incidental to a soldier's life, and which decimate a regiment more surely than the *mitraille* of the enemy. It may assist the inexperienced in their efforts to realize the *misère* which wasted the strength of the combatants in Turkey. This is my reason for placing "La Compagnie Irlandaise" before the Canadian public. While, as much as possible, avoiding all criticism upon the strategy of the campaign in France, I shall confine myself chiefly to the trials through which the contingent of Irishmen under my command passed. There is more in warfare than battles, and there is more in battles than fighting. There is, in fact, a fund of almost untouched literary lore in the daily life of a soldier on active service—and it is upon this comparatively unbroken ground that this book is submitted to the reader's courteous consideration.

Th

Ar

Our

Th

Le

In t

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
The news of Sedan in Ireland.—The Irish Ambulance.— The idea of an Irish Brigade.....	1

CHAPTER II.

Arrival at Havre.—The Ambulance Men volunteer for the Army.—Arrival at Caen	6
--	---

CHAPTER III.

Our reception.—The opinions of the Press.—Colonel McIver.—A Story of "Cuba Libre.".....	15
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

The disasters of France.—A rift in the Clouds.—We leave for the Front.....	36
---	----

CHAPTER V.

Le Mans.—The Pontifical Zouaves.—My conversation with the Artillery Officer.—" <i>Tout de suite, tout de suite.</i> "— Tours.—The Bavarians.—Bourges.—The retreating Army of the Loire.—Our reception at the Cathedral.— A Visit to the Arsenal,—Our First Death.....	43
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

In the Field.—Our Colonel.—"La Irish Compagnie."—Our Commandant.—The Regiment Etranger.—En Route.— News from Home.—Lieut. McAlevey.—"Flirting again."—The Rifle Shot.—The Story of Henri.— "Ireland! Ireland! Where is Ireland?"	66
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

Lieut. McAlevey's Story of the Mexican Campaign.—The History of a Deserter.—Captain Mason.—The Spahis Uhlan Prisoners.—Captain Ceresole.—Death on the Sahara	88
--	----

CHAPTER VIII.

Sunset.—No Shoes.—Timothy Marks.—“Qui, qui, Who's there?”—Going into Action.—“Vive la Legion.”—“ <i>En avant mes Enfants, en avant.</i> ”—A Pole's idea of Love.—Tired.—Sergeant Carey.....	103
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

La Subdery.—A Noble Conscript.—McAlevey's Wit.—Doctor Macken.—The Wounded.—Hospital Studies.—Bourges again.....	122
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

How we fared.—How the War progressed.—A Cross by the Way-side.—How Men are punished on the March.....	137
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

“By gad, it's cowl'd, sir.”—“A man to be shot, sir.”—A Military Execution.—Around the Bivouac.—Bourges again	147
--	-----

CHAPTER XII.

Off for Vierzon.—Christmas Eve.—What we suffered from the Cold.—The <i>Fleur-de-lis</i> .—Franc-tireurs.—Sergeant Donnellan.—A Patrol, with an Adventure	160
--	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Skirmishing.—Joyous anticipations.—Colonel McIver again. “Dog of a European.”—Away for the East.—We are ordered to go with Bourbaki.—Around the Camp Fire.—Another Mexican Story.—The Fight at Cameron.— <i>La Musique de la Guerre</i> .—Up to the Front again.—The Dead at Sainte Marie.—The Story of the <i>Franc-tireur</i> ..	174
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

En route for the Field.—My conversation with Sergeant Donnellan.—“First Blood, Captain.”—*Aux Armes, Aux Armes.*—A Blunder. 201

CHAPTER XV.

Montbelliard.—“*Vive la Chance.*”—A Hard Night on the Field of Battle.—The Chateau.—The Turcos.—“*La Compagnie Irlandaise pour tirailleur.*”—Skirmishing for Twelve Hours.—The Attack 217

CHAPTER XVI.

Our Commandant.—“Last in, last out, you know.”—“Hurrah, hurrah, Vorwärts, vorwärts.”—How Sergeant Carey punished a Sneak.—The Retreat.—Sufferings.—“Poor Donnellan.”—The Main Army crosses over to Switzerland.—Besancon.—Hardships. 230

CHAPTER XVII.

“Wer-da-ist?”—Fighting again.—Hunger.—A reminiscence of New Zealand.—The fight at Bussy.—“Another Good Man gone.”—The Red Farm.—Still Fighting.—Uhlán Dash.—Close Quarters.—“*Drapeau blanc, Drapeau blanc.*”—The armistice. 244

CHAPTER XVIII.

Peace.—Orders.—Working with the Engineers.—My Trip to Besancon.—Compliments of the Press.—What our Colonel thought.—Our Time expires.—We prefer to leave the Service.—Off for Paris.—An Offer to join the Communists.—Home. 267

THE END.

son
us
his
fro
.
dal
wa
ing
con
con
Hu
"th
The
eno
pri
had
cou
mal

LA COMPAGNIE IRLANDAISE :

REMINISCENCES OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.

CHAPTER I.

"Did you hear the news?"

"What news?" we enquired in a breath.

"The Emperor and his army have been taken prisoners of war!" exclaimed our informant, looking at us with a pair of eyes somewhat dilated, while, with his fingers, he played with a newspaper still damp from the press.

"Impossible!" we answered, showing by our incredulity the bent of our sympathies. But our *vis-à-vis* was demonstratively certain, and he tossed off a cooling draught by way of codicil to his information. My companion looked as grave as if he had suddenly come under the influence of some neighbouring Squire Humphrey, while he, in turn, assured me that I looked "the picture of seriousness tempered with surprise." The paper was eagerly taken hold of, and sure enough, "the Emperor and his army had been taken prisoners of war." The news was astounding! We had heard it in the beautiful vale of Clara, in the county Wicklow. My companion and myself were making a knapsack tour from Arklow to Dublin,

through the lovely vale of Avoca, the Alpine vale of Glenmalure, the scenic beauties of the vale of Clara, Roundwood, the Devil's Glen, Powerscourt, and Dublin. We were sitting in front of Jordan's hotel at Glendalough when we heard the unwelcome intelligence of the disaster at Sedan. It was a beautiful day in September, 1870. The ruins of those early records of Christian piety and architectural beauty, the Seven Churches and the Round Tower, were close at hand.

" Glendalough whose gloomy shore
Skylark never warbles o'er,"

was within rifle shot ; and St. Kevin's Church " topped the neighbouring hill." It was, I remember, Sunday. My friend and I had just returned from mass. He was a Protestant and a divinity student as well. He was, too, a Trinity man, and was as free from all religious animosities as a Christian gentleman should be. He is now in holy orders, and winning for himself a brilliant reputation in Bury, England. But he was a thorough Irish gentleman, with strong Franco-Irish sympathies, and we often passed the time away by brilliant speculations of the probable humiliation that awaited the troops of the " Vaterland " at the hands of the gallant soldiers of the *Armée Française*. Although of different religions we were constant companions and the best of friends. We could always hit off our differences to what Barney Blinds called " a hair." We jointly agreed that *there were* more beautiful " spots " in " the wide world " than what the Beranger of Ireland called " The vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet ; " that the brave clans of the O'Byrnes had good vantage

ground in Glenmalure when they were fighting against the onslaught of the troops of the Pale, and we had historical dissertations upon the state of society when saintly men were allowed to "hurl" pretty girls from "off beetling rocks" without a special commission being formed to bring the culprit to trial. But the news we heard at Jordan's changed the current of our thoughts from the past to the present. We attempted to guess at the probable result of this disaster to the arms and fortunes of France. Revolution and anarchy, monarchy and republic, each passed in rapid review. But our speculations were all in vain, and at last we confessed that we knew nothing about it. My friend was of an ardent temperament—enthusiastic in anticipation, depressed in misfortune. To him the charms of the delightful place were lost. At times he was dull, while at other times a fiery expression lit up his handsome face, and he looked as if he was preparing to place his squadrons in the field and "march to death with military glee." As for him the tour was spoiled, and after a tramp to Wicklow, he threw up the sponge, we took the cars and were soon bowling back to town again.

There is a species of madness which is nothing more than ideal enthusiasm, and the people of Dublin were ideal mad about France and her disasters in September, 1870. The fortunes of *La Grande Nation* were indeed overcast with gloom. The surrender of Mack at Ulm had been thrown into the shade by the calamity at Sedan, where 70,000 Frenchmen passed under the Caudine forks. Jena and Friedland had been avenged. The army of France had been gobbled up by the hosts

of Germany. As Egypt, the cradle of civilization, had been overrun by Ethiopians, nurtured amidst hardier conditions; as Babylonia was subdued by Chaldeans from Taurus and Caucasus; as Persia fell beneath the rapid onslaughts of Arabs and Moguls; and, later on in history, as the Roman Empire fell beneath the Franks, Goths, Huns, Arabs and Vandals, so did Northern France lie prostrate beneath the iron heel of victorious Germany. The Teuton was everywhere triumphant over the Gaul. The hope of obtaining the Rhine frontier for France had vanished into thin air. The dream of Lavallée was, for the time being, no more. The Emperor and his army prisoners of war! Marshal Bazaine, the conqueror of Mexico, thwarted at Metz, Mars-le-Tours and Resonville, and his magnificent army cut in two, as had been a week before, in the same masterly manner, that of MacMahon at Woerth. Strasburg, Toul and Laon were in danger of immediate bombardment and capitulation. Paris was threatened, and but a handful of regular troops were left to defend the national flag. But the spirit of the nation was unsubdued. The Republic had been proclaimed on the 4th of September, and it was fondly hoped that the new government would save the country. The nation was called to arms! Behind the Loire the Mables were organizing with much rapidity. Free corps were found everywhere. The *débris* of MacMahon's army, under Vinoy, had made its way to Paris, and formed a nucleus for the ill-conditioned garrison. With hardly a regular soldier in the field, distracted in her internal resources, a revolution in her capital, France had nothing but her newly

raised levies to resist the most perfectly organized army the world had ever seen. In Ireland sympathy for France arose into an impassioned cry. The French Consul in Dublin was serenaded, and "killing a Hessian for yourself" became once more a household word. Then the idea of an Irish Ambulance was originated. Money was to be had in abundance, and a number of qualified doctors, with all, and, indeed, more than necessary, appliances, were soon prepared to start for Havre, under the emblematic flag of the old Calvinistic city of Geneva. Military men knew that the Ambulance had too many men. More doctors and less volunteers would have been desirable. But the Ambulance left Ireland with considerable *éclat*. A number of the men asked me if I would follow them. If I did, they promised that they would volunteer, under my command, for the army. I was just in the mood for an adventure. The time and place were opportune, and I determined to follow the Ambulance. The two next days were spent in making some necessary preparations. I amused some of my friends and alarmed some others, by seriously depositing my last will and testament in the safe-keeping of my lawyer. My Trinity friend made an acrobatic spring at me when I informed him of my determination. Then there was a meeting of old acquaintances, a bumper at parting, a hundred hearty farewells, a few companions with me, and "I was off to the wars again."

CHAPTER II.

"Semper et ubique fideles."

La belle France loomed through a misty atmosphere on the 14th of October, 1870, and the waves licked high up against the chalk cliffs of *Seine Inferieure* as we steamed into the harbour of Havre. Spray was tossed in miniature showers over the quay, and the old tower of Francis I. was surrounded by gaily dressed groups of the soldier citizens of the day. The historical associations of this old city were recalled by the well-garrisoned batteries which I saw at hand, and the bustle and activity on the wharves assured me that the 74,000 people who live in Havre drive a lusty trade with their neighbours. It was here that Henry of Richmond embarked with 4,000 men for Milford Haven and Bosworth Field. I remembered, when a youngster, reading of the gallant defense made by Warwick, when the town was held by the English, in 1562, and that it was here Charles II. landed after his flight from Worcester and the adventure of the Royal Oak, in 1651. I thought of these events and much more as we steamed alongside the wharf, and passing up the gangway I stood on French soil, with a fair prospect of never seeing my native land again. But there was no time for reverie, for a *gendarme* demanded "your passport, sare," and then I and my companions were soon on the way to our hotel. It was a gala day in Havre. The Irish Ambulance had been

received with princely honours. The municipal authorities turned out, the military were paraded, and the civilians gaily decorated their houses in honour of the men who went to France to assist her in the hour of her affliction.

"*Vive l'Irlande*," said a demonstrative-looking Frenchman, as I was about to enter the old-fashioned portico of the *Hotel des Londres*, while I, catching the inspiration, and bowing with a new-born grace, which I verily believe these Frenchmen have the power of spreading around their name and local habitation, as demonstratively replied "*Vive la France*." "We love ze Irish, sare," said another Frenchman, as I was about to enter my room,—and sure enough, the sympathetic chord between Ireland and France had been touched anew, and it had given back its most affecting and pathetic sound in response. The press of Havre lavished encomiums upon the appearance of the men, and Dr. Baxter, the chief of the Ambulance, and the remainder of his surgeons, were entertained at a public banquet at the *Mairie*, and mutual pledges were made, and a fraternity of fellowship was once more entered upon between Ireland and France. For the moment, the people of Havre appeared to forget the strides that the German armies had made through France. Bazaine was still at Metz; his troops were starving, and capitulation was imminent. Optimists, indeed, still hung on that powerful retribution—"an armed nation." The condition of European armies, with their arms of precision, has, however, rendered obsolete the faith which was once placed in the irresistibility of a nation in arms. It is means, not men,

which now influence the destinies of armies. The necessity for great genius is not so indispensable to success, as the admirable working of the minute mechanism, so as to influence and direct the whole. 'Tis true, indeed, that Russia, in 1812, was overwhelmed for the time, but with continued resistance she overcame her disasters, and left even the great Napoleon unable to revenge the defeats he sustained from the hardy armies of the North. 'Tis true, too, that the untrained people of Spain, aided by a handful of British troops, beat the legions of Napoleon, led as they were by the first captains of the age. So did the Swiss, from their mountain fastnesses, drive out the Austrians in 1499; and again, the raw levies of the Carolinas, assisted by Rochambeau and the French troops, compelled Cornwallis and 16,000 English soldiers to surrender as prisoners of war. But the conditions of war have changed since then. War is now a scientific game, at which the expert alone can succeed. The appliances of modern warfare have forever destroyed the hopes of irregular troops, unless under conditions singularly favourable to the irregulars, or where the geographical conformation of the country renders it necessary for the regular troops to adopt irregular warfare, as in New Zealand, for instance. The "majesty of an armed nation" is a thing of the past, so far at least as its prowess is concerned, when directed against the trained levies of a great military power. Nor do I fully accept the opinion of some eminent writers, that old soldiers are not so good as young ones. There were men in France who believed that the *élan* of the raw levies then being trained, would more than match

that
told
that
done
who
capt
expe
the
to c
nati
tion
old
upon
deli
B
the
land
sold
the
imp
pen
Fra
Am
bac
onc
cal
Pr
qu
cif
irr
w
of

that of the regular troops. I was more than once told that Ney acknowledged, after the battle of Lutzen, that with his Grenadiers of the Guard he could not have done what was accomplished by his youthful conscripts, who were led five times, ultimately with success, to the capture of the salient points, which the older and more experienced men would have given up as hopeless after the second attempt. But all this was not so apparent to cooler heads. People who were not blinded by national animosity, took a different view of the situation. Frenchmen appeared to have forgotten the good old maxim of Sallust, which taught that before entering upon action, there was need of deliberation, and having deliberated, a necessity of speedy execution.

But all my work was yet before me. I had yet to test the sincerity of the men who pledged their word in Ireland, that "the imminent breach and deadly peril" of a soldier's life was more congenial to their nature than the more humanitarian occupation of promenading improvised ambulances, administering balm, and dispensing comforts to the sick and wounded soldiers of France. I had to find out the whereabouts of the Irish Ambulance, and then to see if the men would turn their backs upon a fair fight, or think that distance lends enchantment, and courage, to what theatrical people call "the pomp and circumstances of glorious war." Pressing on to the *Lycee*, where the Ambulance was quartered, I obtained my first impression of the discipline and conduct of the raw levies by the loose and irregular formation of some of the *Garde Nationale*, who were hurrying through the streets in the direction of the railway. They were equipped as if for active

service, and were singing the *Marseillaise* with a vigour, and indeed with a touch of real feeling, which Frenchmen generally contrive to cultivate in the patriotic chants. But they were a motley crew, armed with old flint-locks, converted to the percussion principle on the Tablet system, badly dressed, loosely directed, and in some cases with the entire bread contents of their haversacks, jocularly stuck on the tops of the guns, like a piece of putty on a marlin spike. The capital of Normandy was at that time threatened by the Germans, and this contingent of the *Garde Nationale* was all that Havre—the “Liverpool of France”—could send to protect the ancient and majestic chief town of *Seine Inferieure*. As they walked away from the *Mairie*, they must have left a sad foreboding upon the minds of the few invalided soldiers of the Line who witnessed their departure, and one of whom I saw ominously shake his head with desponding significance, while I heard him almost inaudibly mutter, “*La pauvre France.*”

But I should press on to the *Lycee*. Passing along the spacious *Place Napoleon III.*, with its public gardens and handsome edifices; on through some narrow streets by open spaces where drill instructors were teaching the *bourgeoisie* some of the mysteries of a soldier's trade, I was attracted to a piece of waste ground, where I saw a man with a wooden leg instructing a full company of the *Garde Nationale* in the manual of arms. He appeared to be a well-known character, for no notice was taken of his peculiar appearance; and the way he handled his gun was sufficient proof that the medals he wore upon his expansive breast

were won in actual, and not in mimic, warfare. But the *Lycée* was before me, and the unsightly but familiar uniform of the men of the Irish Ambulance now and again passed me on the way. To the people they were objects of interest, and indeed, their fine proportions might compare favorably with the natives of the country they had come to aid. But I soon reached my destination, where the red-cross banner waved its peaceful folds over the entrance to the *Lycée*, and where an Ambulance man paced under the portico of the gate in the capacity of a sentry. It was, after all, a pleasant sight to witness the ardour with which the Ambulance men entered upon their duties, and the pride, too, they took in their charitable occupation. But the plot thickened, or more correctly, the events which military men in Ireland had anticipated, actually occurred. The Ambulance was too large! Three hundred men were not required to attend on four Ambulance waggons, and the doleful news that only one hundred, all told, could be accepted, struck dismay into the ranks of the gallant knights of the red-cross flag.

Prudence, that mother of success, had certainly not marked the acts of the Ambulance Committee in lending to France more than three times the number of men required, and France had too many idle mouths to feed, to think of accepting their services. For this failure the Ambulance Committee was alone to blame. For a day or two the feeling amongst the Ambulance men was justly indignant. There was much dissatisfaction amongst the men who went to France to be Ambulance men, pure and simple. I had already one

hundred men who were prepared to volunteer for the army, irrespective of the existence or non-existence of the *Ambulance Irlandaise*. They were determined to be soldiers, let the Ambulance sink or swim. Sunday came. The volunteers for the army paraded in front of their quarters, and marched to mass, and fell off in detachments and went to other places of worship with singular precision and good order. Yes, your Irishman is surely a soldier by intuition. He can learn as much drill in one month as some other men can in two; at least that is my experience in the English service, where, as a stripling lieutenant, I first learned the mysteries of that aerobatic performance—the goose-step. The decorum the Irish volunteers observed that Sunday in Havre was a precursor of their good conduct on many a hard, trying day afterwards, and I could not but feel proud of the soldierly gait and erect carriage of the men, who, as yet, scarcely knew their facings. On my part I studiously avoided asking any man to volunteer, but I welcomed all who did so on their own responsibility. There was no pressure, not even a request, all were free, and the men had the option of accepting military service, take their chance of being selected for the Ambulance, or return to Ireland. Dr. Baxter selected the best of the men who remained after the volunteering for the army had been completed, and between us we had the cream of the corps, as each set about his own way of carving his destiny.

I bade Dr. Baxter and his friends good-bye, gave a word or two of command, and we were away for Caen. On the way we were intercepted by the municipal authorities, the Commandant of the troops, and the

er for the
-existence
rmined to

Sunday
in front
fell off in
ship with
our Irish-
n learn as
n in two;
a service,
rned the
ne goose-
observed
their good
ds, and I
und erect
ew their
king any
lid so on
sure, not
e option
of being
nd. Dr.
ed after
eted, and
each set

gave a
for Caen.
unicipal
and the

officers of the National Guard. About one thousand of the troops were drawn up in three sides of a square, the Irish volunteers occupying the fourth side. The tricolour was fluttering above our heads, and the inspiring *Marseillaise* was being played by the band, as the Mayor advanced, and in the name of France, "thanked us for the course we had taken." After all, I thought that the gift of the Ambulance to France was very like Count Fresco's gift to the organ-grinder's monkey "in the sacred name of humanity," while our gift was in the name of sympathy and the bond of affection. Then the Commandant spoke, and in tones which always distinguish the cultivated man of travel. Unlike some of his friends, he did not insist upon forcing his well-shaved cheek into grating contact with my own, for which small mercy I was duly thankful. And then the parting—such "sweet sorrow"—came at last. We had about a mile to walk to the station. The rain fell in torrents. There was to have been a demonstration in our honour, but the rain quenched the desire of our hospitable friends. Like every other country, France had men who "would themselves have been soldiers only for that villainous saltpetre," and I rejoiced that I escaped their attentions. The train was crowded with troops hurrying to the front. The Irish volunteers, drenched with rain, crowded into compartments set apart for themselves, were soon bowling away to seek the bubble reputation, or what Mark Mickle called "a gold chain or a wooden leg, you know." For my own part, during the ten hours' drive from Havre to Caen, I was as comfortable as I would have been in a trip from Dublin to my native heath in

Galway; but the men, who were to be the rank and file, several of whom were gentlemen by birth, education, social position and means,—crowded, nay, packed, into third-class railway carriages, with steaming clothes,—they experienced the realities of campaigning soon enough to test the metal of them all. But the spirit of the times was—

“ Mais a la guerre,
Comme a la guerre.”

The train sped onwards through Rouen, with all its majestic buildings, its antique structures, and its ecclesiastical and civil architecture of the Middle Ages. Rouen did not then appear to have deserved the name of the Manchester of France, but I saw its busy thoroughfares at other times, when the industrious people were crowding like ants passing to and fro. And there was that magnificent Gothic cathedral, with its profuse decorations, its gorgeous façade, somewhat confused, perhaps, but splendid for all that. The night passed slowly away. It was dark and damp. The rain pattered against the glass, and, now and again, the wind, weird monitor for many a gallant heart, moaned a requiem over the corpses which the lantern revealed outside the city, where there had that day been a fight. The sight aroused us all. The train moved slowly. The Germans were in the neighbourhood. The bodies of their dead lay close to the track. The burial parties were scattered about, and gave to the scene all the grim realities of war. Most of my men had never seen those things before, and if brave hearts quailed a little at the sight, it was but the shock which most men experience when for the first time they stand face to face with death.

CHAPTER III.

"Her matchless sons, whose valour still remains
On French records of twenty long campaigns."

Bowling away over the fertile plains of Normandy, we at last entered Caen about 8 A.M. We left Havre with *éclat*; we entered Caen under a cloud. We were very plainly told that the people of Caen had had enough of "ze Irlandaise." We were covered with confusion. I was reminded of the *bon mot* of Talleyrand, who said that soldiers were called "military" because they were not "civil." The people of Caen appeared to think that Talleyrand said that in anticipation of our advent into their city. Some of the men must, I fear, have sworn "profoundly" at the manner in which they were received. But it was not for long. We changed all that when we got into working order, which did not take us long. Uniforms were distributed, the guard placed, orderly-room established, officers appointed, and we had six hours' hard work at drill every day. Out of one hundred men and four officers I scarcely think that there was a man under five feet eight, and Achilles, clad in the divine armour of Vulcan, could look no more haughty than these Irish volunteers when arrayed in the neat kepis and becoming uniforms of the French regular army. Our friends at home soon heard of our progress, and from the old land encouraging reports were constantly reaching us. What a pity speculation is such a sorry

jade! If expectations were realized, we were destined to emblazon our names on the scroll of Franco-Irish history. We were to emulate the deeds of the Sarsfields, the Clares, the O'Neills, the Dillons, and the Burkes, of the Old Brigade. We were destined to carve our way to glory, as our fathers did at Cremona, Charlevoix, Heidelberg, Urgul, Marsiglia, Fontenoy, Ypres and Valency. So we were told, and so it was *not* to be. Accident very often makes the hero, and the special accident by which we were to become immortal did not offer, and so we were obliged to be content with the satisfaction of simply doing our duty, no more, and I hope no less. But things were changing for the better in Caen. As the people learned to understand us, they learned to like us. They found out that "ze Irlandaise" was not such a bad fellow after all. Complimentary notices appeared in the papers; the men were sought after, the officers were entertained, and the people became profuse in their hospitality. The *Bulletin de la Guerre* paid us the following compliment:

THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS.—Last Saturday we saw with deep emotion the Irish volunteers marching through our streets, and heard their deep voices singing their national songs. How well the self-contained attitude of those young men became their martial bearing. They have taught a lesson to our public-house braggarts, whom we saw a few days ago going to have themselves transformed into soldiers. We blush to think that those noble strangers place at the service of France a courage and a devotion which many of her own children have not shown.

Other papers followed suit, and altogether, our time passed creditably and pleasantly in the "City of Churches." We frequently encountered that not

alarming enemy an "imaginary foe" on the race-course, and in mimic combat fought for the possession of a bridge which spanned a stream close at hand. In our marches to the country the peasants, with feet enclosed in the hereditary *sabot*, listened in wonderment to the singing of the men. In Caen every hat flew off as we passed, ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and honours were paid to all ranks, by the community at large.

All went well with us while all was disastrous to France. "Metz has capitulated!" was on everybody's lips on the evening of October the 27th, and the last hope of France appeared to vanish with the news. It is not my purpose here to pretend to analyze the strategy of some of the ablest captains of the age. It is a sorry impudence that presumes to openly censure the military conduct of such men as the hero of the Malakoff and the victor of Magenta, or to accept results without enquiring into the cause of the ruin of the conqueror of Mexico. There may be more things in the philosophy of those men than is dreamt of by their censors. There are some men so wise in their own conceits that the labours of a lifetime are, according to them, acquired in an hour. There is so much "after-wisdom" in the world that fools pronounce opinions where, previously, wise men would fear to tread. There are, in my humble opinion, one or two moves on the gigantic chess-board of the campaign on the French frontier, which justifies the supposition that Prince Frederick Charles was a better strategist than Bazaine, and that MacMahon was out-generalled by the Crown Prince of Prussia. But the one broad and sig-

nificant fact is, that the organization of the one army was overwhelming in the multitude of its resources, while the organization of the other was disastrously deficient. The officers of the German armies were better educated, the training of the men was more in accordance with the experience of modern warfare, and above all, the supplies for the army in the field were so regulated that failure was almost impossible. It was not the French army nor the French commanders that failed, but it was the self-confident opinion of Marshal Leboeuf on the one hand and of the French *Intendance* on the other.

No troops ever fought more heroically than the French Army of the Rhine. Overwhelmed by numbers, demoralized by insufficient supplies, the fearful havoc they made in the ranks of their enemies attested the valour of their race, and that they were of the same family as the men of Jena, Friedland, Austerlitz, Moscow, Italy, and the Crimea.

At the commencement of the war the French army was nominally 650,000 men, or an available soldier to one-fifty-eight of the population, while the numbered force of Germany was 1,183,000 men. But experience proves that nominal muster-rolls are deceptive. At the commencement of the Italian war, France had on paper 639,000 men, but only 230,000 could be brought to Italy, and but 107,000 were placed in line at Solferino. But I digress. Dijon was occupied by the Germans on the 29th,—and just one small success before Paris, at La Bourget, was the one item to the valour of France during the disastrous week that closed the month of October. As the hordes of Attila

and Tamerlane carried destruction on their way, so did the armies of Germany carry ruin and decay into the fertile fields of sunny France. The House of Brandenburg had extended its dominion, and the Machiavellian policy of Prussia in the violated Treaty of Gastein, in its premeditated attack upon Austria, and in its policy to Hanover, had once more triumphed, and this time had altered, or at least retarded, the destiny of a nation. The acme of glory and dominion which had been reached by Charles V., was left in the shade by the conquests of King William. At this period the fortunes of France appeared to be at their lowest ebb. The people had become somewhat apathetic, and if some one in the trust and confidence of the nation had counselled submission, France would have accepted defeat and would have succumbed to the invisible hand of Fate. But a contrary spirit soon animated the people of France. Gambetta aroused the nation to a spirit of resistance, and the cry of "*guerre à l'outrance!*" was quickly echoed throughout the land. Whatever the world may think of Gambetta's political creed, it must admit that it was he, and he alone, who aroused the people of France to a vigorous defence, when her repeated disasters had almost crushed even the martial spirit of her warlike race. A levy *en masse* was proclaimed, and every unmarried man between the ages of eighteen and forty-eight was declared liable to serve in the ranks of the army. From all corners of Calvados the conscripts assembled in Caen, and our quarters became crammed with young men who were being formed into regiments of *Gardes Mobiles*—the militia of the country.

But to my narrative. Time was wearing on and strange events were occurring around us. As poverty is said to bring strange bed-fellows, so does soldiering bring us in contact with strange companions indeed. Soldiers of fortune are said to be found everywhere. These men call themselves "citizens of the world," and France found a good number of them in the ranks of her armies in 1870 and 1871. One day, while I was standing in the barrack square watching the sergeant-major drilling my company, I noticed a tall, military-looking gentleman coming through the gate. Although unknown to us all, the sentry saluted, conscious that no one but a soldier ever yet carried himself with such dignified, but yet easy, grace, as did the tall gentleman that attracted my attention. His *physique* was magnificent. He had the torso of the Farnese Hercules, and it would take the pen of Theophile Gautier to do justice to the divinity of his form. He looked about thirty-eight or forty years of age, was closely shaved, except his upper lip, where a small but highly cultivated moustache did not prevent the pearly teeth underneath from being seen. He wore a tight-fitting frock-coat, and he carried himself with a quiet, yet conscious, assurance that he looked every inch a soldier. Making straight for where I stood, when near enough, he took off his hat and said, "You are Captain Kirwan, I presume?" I answered "Yes," and he immediately handed me a letter of introduction from an old friend, with whom I had spent many a hard day's toil upon the banks of the Waikato, in New Zealand. He introduced "Colonel Henry McIver, formerly major in the army of the Southern States

and afterwards colonel of cavalry in the service of the Khedive of Egypt." My ideal was realized; Henry McIver was what he looked to be—a *beau sabreur*—a man who had served under ten flags and fought under nine. He is one of the military marvels of the age. I heard his history afterwards at my quarters, where he came to spend a quiet evening with myself, my subs, and the doctor. He commenced life, he told me, as a cadet in the East India Company's service—served through the Mutiny; went to the Southern States, served four years, and became major of cavalry; then went to Cuba, where he was taken prisoner; escaped to New York, and went to Crete, where he joined the insurgents, and was decorated; from there to South America, where he raised a volunteer regiment at Buenos Ayres; from there to Mexico, where he served against Maximilian; from there to Egypt, where he became colonel of cavalry, and now he was on his way to Tours to offer his services to the government of the French Republic. He was communicative, if he thought you understood him, but he was never a braggart. During the evening, when cigars were out, and a bowl of punch lay steaming upon the table, McIver entertained us with many a stirring event by flood and field. With the incidents of American warfare he thought the world was too familiar, to trace the record of his services under the "bonny blue flag that bore the silver star." But he told us much about Cuba, and his experience while he was serving in the ranks of the insurgent forces.

"You must know," said he, "that, above all places where I have served, I prefer Cuba to them all. Yes,

Cuba is indeed the Queen of the Antilles, and all my sympathies have been, and still are, in the cause of 'Cuba Libre.' By nature I am a lover of liberty," he continued, "and when I left New York for Havana it was because of my desire to assist in the good cause of Cuban independence. That was in January, last year, and in December my sands had almost run."

"How was that, Colonel?" I enquired, anxious to hear some of the history of this singular man.

"Well, I'll tell you," said McIver, sipping at his punch. "When I joined Cespedes, I easily obtained a command. At that time one-half of the island was in possession of the patriots,—and, as Cuba is larger than Ireland, you can understand that supplies of all kinds, except arms and ammunition, were abundant. I was glad to be in harness again, and among the beautiful *Montanos del Cobre* I was happier than when I was promenading the boulevards of New York or Paris. The primeval beauty of the Cuban forests are remarkable, while the tropical abundance, farinacious roots, yams and sweet potatoes provided us with subsistence at the worst of times. The giant mahogany trees, the numerous palms, with vines of immense growth encircling their trunks with parasitical embrace; the alimentary plants in prodigal profusion, pine apple, sweet and bitter yuca—with all these surroundings, you may be sure, we did not starve amidst these forests. Well, the usual work of guerilla warfare was carried on. I had often found myself in the 'imminent breach and deadly peril,' but 'the devil takes care of his own,' they say, and, for a surety, I must be one of his favourites. I remember, on May-day,

1869, I was ordered to approach Havana, in order to arrest and to decimate a company of men who had disgraced themselves some time previous. It was early morning when I started. I had one companion, an officer of distinction in the insurrectionary forces. As the corps we were to arrest was principally composed of foreigners, I was intrusted with the principal mission. My companion was merely to assist me in my efforts to subdue the few natives who formed part of the corps we went to decimate. While speaking to my companion of the unpleasant task I had to perform, he replied :

“ ‘Oh, it is nothing. I was decimated myself not long ago. Cespedes is strict, and he ordered it. They commenced by surrounding and disarming us; then, if any officers were found in the number, their names were proclaimed aloud, or they were degraded. Then the ranks were broken, and we were aligned in single file, each man taking his place according to chance. A sergeant, drawn by lot and blindfolded, then approached the line, and, starting from the first man he chanced to touch, without including him, counted off ten, twenty, thirty, until he reached the end of the line, when he continued in the other direction, commencing again with the man he first touched, and if that poor fellow happened to be the tenth, or twentieth, or thirtieth, psit! his doom was clear.’

“ ‘Great heavens! thought I,” said McIver, “how terribly cool he takes it!

“ ‘While the counting went on,’ continued my companion, ‘a roll of the drums accompanied each tenth man as he stepped out; he was led to the edge of the

trench dug out for his grave, a sufficient amount of lead lodged in his head or breast, and his affair was ended. You see that much time is not lost, and the business even becomes amusing sometimes, for every man's pride is up, and he chats, jokes, laughs, appoints a *rendezvous* under ground a year, a month, or perhaps only a day off,—and all the while the regimental band regales you with the merriest symphonies, the most alluring marches!

“ ‘ You would not make a mockery of death?’ cried I, interrupting him.

“ ‘ Mockery!’ he returned. ‘ *Diable !* we won't have much chance to do so here. We haven't yet even disarmed our friends ; General Cespedes evidently honours us both with his practical esteem, to send us two alone to decimate more than eighty jokers, each of whom carries ten rounds of ammunition to answer our polite proposition with.’

“ ‘ Nevertheless, the enterprise amuses you a little, does it not?’ I answered,” said McIver, between sips at his punch.

“ ‘ Humph ! whether a man leaves his skin here or elsewhere, what matters it ? Although it is disagreeable to be sent out of the world by your old comrades, your friends at the bivouac—fellows whose elbows you are accustomed to feel in the ranks. But after all, those fellows haven't treated us right ; that is a consolation.’

“ ‘ But the other proceeding Cespedes mentioned,’ said I ; ‘ the drawing—you have not explained that?’

“ ‘ Ah ! I can only teach you what I know myself ; though I was something more than a mere amateur

scholar. I have heard that they sometimes mix up the names in a helmet or shako, and shoot the man that owns every tenth name that comes out. But, my friend! that way is shorter than the other, but if it suits you better, you may use it. H'st!

"He stopped short in the middle of the road," continued McIver, "and carried the musket he had brought with him to his shoulder as a bullet whistled by our ears, and a thread of white smoke rose from a ravine some little distance off; a moment after a tall, wild-looking man, enveloped in a long cloak and wearing a Spanish military hat, sprang toward the mountain side, where, in the twinkling of an eye, he disappeared."

"Don't fire," I cried, as my friend was about to pull trigger; "you will give those wretches the alarm. Wait until they attack us. That fellow will simplify our business. Forward—gallop! Remember the mission we have to fulfil."

"Ten minutes later we were at our destination. The company had stacked their arms about a hundred paces from the mountain, and had spread themselves through the village. The drummer alone, a boy of fifteen, stood guard over the arms under the protection of some old soldiers, who, cooler-blooded than their comrades, walked leisurely about smoking their pipes.

"I rode straight to the drummer, and without dismounting, said: 'Beat the recall, drummer; I am in haste.'

"The smokers," continued the Colonel, "at this order, approached us, and stared at us with an abashed air. The most insolent of them gave the military

salute, through force of habit, apparently. But they seemed thoughtless, and twisted their moustaches without speaking.

"The drummer, uneasy as to the others, rose, hooked on his drum, and replied by a prolonged roll, which did not cease until the whole company stood behind their stacks.

"'What is all this noise about? Are you a fool, drummer?' cried the Lieutenant, coming up last of all, at a run, from the further end of the village, and carrying a bottle in one hand and a glass in the other.

"The sight of two horsemen caused him to redouble his speed, and when he reached us he could scarcely gasp, in his astonishment and want of breath.

"'You, Colonel McIver! You here! Glad to see you, *caro mio*. Welcome! We scarcely expected so agreeable a surprise. What can we do for you, Colonel? Will you take a glass of rum?"

"I spurred my horse toward the Lieutenant, and, with a sudden blow breaking the glass and bottle he held, said briefly and sternly:

"'Your sword, Lieutenant.'

"The Lieutenant turned pale, and recoiling a couple of paces, said in a husky voice:

"'My sword! Was it to demand my sword that you came from Cespedes?"

"We come to decimate you. Cespedes has ordered it."

"And I dismounted, placing myself in their power, to prove to the mutineers the fixedness of my resolve to carry out my orders or die in the attempt. The idea seemed, however, to excite their mirth," said McIver, with a smile.

" 'Decimate us!' cried one.

" 'Beautiful!' laughed another.

" And cries of 'Prodigious!' 'What a farce!' 'Whom will he do it with?' 'He hasn't even a corporal's guard!' rang on every side. The men left the stacks of arms, and began to gather round us with menacing looks and gestures. My friend threw himself among the most furious, but his words availed nothing to restrain them. The situation was becoming critical.

" Suddenly a thought struck me. I signed to the drummer to beat his drum; so that its continued roll might drown their voices, and the more desperate be thus prevented from urging on those who hesitated.

" Anything which brings the habits of discipline to the minds of old soldiers acts with wonderful power. Before the roll of the drum ceased, every man had regained his place—the tumult was ended, and quiet reigned.

" 'We are come to decimate you,' I continued, coldly and sternly as before, 'and we are alone. Do you ask why? Because Cespedes wishes the execution to be secret; he would not have the company dishonoured before their comrades—dishonoured for having turned their backs when all was ready to march upon your enemy and the enemy of 'Cuba Libre.'"

" 'But we did not do so,' cried one of the men.

" 'Silence! The Colonel is right,' replied several.

" 'Then the Lieutenant deceived us; he told us the Colonel would protect us,' said a young soldier.

" 'Their tone had already changed. It was no longer hostile," said McIver, sipping at his punch.

" 'I!' cried the Lieutenant. 'Did I ever say aught to make you doubt the Colonel's honour?'

" 'No! no!' cried voice after voice. 'It is our fault. Let us suffer the penalty! Decimate us, Colonel!' cried several, 'and let us have it over as soon as may be. We are ready!'

" 'Lieutenant,' I continued, advancing, 'I demand your sword.'

" He moved his hand to the buckle of his belt, as if to take it off, but the struggle was too great for his proud heart; his youthful blood was in arms, and carried away by passion, he shouted hoarsely:

" 'Then come and take it!'

" And drawing it from his sheath, he threw himself on guard.

" 'Bravo, Lieutenant! Let him come and take it,' cried a voice at his side.

" There was no time for consideration; I at once fell on guard myself. The Lieutenant awaited my attack with his blade low, after the manner of the Cubans, but at my first lunge, breaking down his guard before we had even crossed swords, whether it was that remorse for his act prevented his exerting his usual skill or through unlucky mischance on his part, I disarmed him, catching his guard on the point of my sword and forcing his weapon from his hand.

" 'Curses!' he exclaimed, angrily, and then, pale with shame and despair, he sobbed out, 'Shoot me first, Colonel, I implore you.'

" All this while my friend was writing the names of the men upon slips of paper, which were put into a hat.

"'But this is not the way it is done,' cried the Lieutenant, in a desperate tone. 'Permit me to instruct you.'

"'Silence in the ranks,' I cried.

"'But we will never get through at this rate, Colonel.'

"'I am not responsible to you, sir. It is the order of Cespedes. Now come hither,' said I to my companion, 'and draw four names for the firing party.'

"'It was an old man's name that he drew.

"'Sampierri!'

"'I never had any luck,' growled Sampierri, stamping angrily upon the ground.

"'He took up his musket.

"'Nicolo, Mordini, and Rusponel' continued my companion.

"'Meanwhile a party of men was silently digging a trench to our left, about two hundred paces from the mountain, where the earth was soft and offered but little resistance.

"'Come—attention, firing party!' said the Corporal.

"'He marched to the trench at the head of his four grenadiers.

"'Nine slips were successively drawn, so that the suspense continued to the end. The tenth he held up.

"'The Sergeant Gasparini!'

"'Gasparini bent over the drummer, and the tears, spite of his proud endeavours to restrain them, dropped on his gray moustache.

"'Here, take this for thy trouble, my boy,' he said, giving the drummer his silver watch; then, dashing

the tears from his eyes shamefacedly, with a steady step marched to the edge of the trench.

"'Ready!' cried the Corporal.

"'Aim! Fire!' cried Gasparini.

"A flash and report followed, and the old sergeant fell dead on his face in the trench, where he was pushed to the place where he was to rest.

"The drawing continued from eleven to nineteen. Twenty reached, my companion took the slip, lifted it above his head, and sobbed, rather than spoke, in his endeavours to conceal his emotion:

"'The Sergeant-major Miemo!'

"He was the best instructed under-officer, perhaps, in the regiment; calm, knowing well his duties, laborious—so useful, in fact, in the humble post he held that his superiors, through pure selfishness, had never proposed him for promotion.

"'Ah! poor Gasparini,' he cried, with a sort of mournful merriment; 'if to-day is the day of the old growlers, it is also the day of sergeants.'

"He crossed himself devoutly, and walked to the trench, his hands in his pockets, bent one knee to the earth, and gave the word 'Fire!'

"We heard a report; Miemo, his head shattered by the bullets, rolled like a lump of lead into the trench.

"'Will those beggarly Spaniards never appear?' said I to my companion, aside. 'I have had more than enough of this.'

"'Hush!' he replied. 'You do not know them yet as well as I, who have been fighting them for some time. I have just discovered a whole detachment in

the declivity yonder before us. They are climbing along above us, so as to attack us in front and on both flanks at once. I have counted two hundred muskets and carbines. We will have hot enough work in a few minutes.'

" 'God grant it! Continue, but more slowly, so that we need not kill any more.'

" 'Slowly, however, as he proceeded to tear up the names drawn, slowly as the drawing went on, number thirty at length came forth. He lifted it up to read the name, but remained for an instant silent.

" 'Who? who?' resounded on all sides.

" 'To the devil with it! Let whom it concerns read it,' cried my companion, flinging it upon the ground.

" 'I will wager it is I,' said the Lieutenant, springing forward to pick it up. 'Yes, it is, indeed. The Lieutenant Polidoro!'

" 'Did you not make a mistake?' asked I. 'I think it is only twenty-nine.'

" 'Yes, yes, Colonel, it is only twenty-nine,' cried a soldier. 'Don't, for heaven's sake, decimate an officer.'

" 'Do you take me for a fool?' shouted Polidoro. 'I counted them, and it is thirty. Come, come! Every one in his turn! No joking! Your hand, Colonel! You forgive me?'

" He had scarcely spoken when a signal shot was heard from the mountain, and following upon it two fierce blazes of fire crashed on our right and left, and concealed our assailants in their thick smoke.

" It was indeed the Spaniards, who had filed toward the mountain. Learning that a company of Cubans was near, they halted on their way in the hope of capturing us.

‘At the crash of the discharge, Polidoro sprang forward like a lion. The smell of battle seemed to intoxicate him. His eyes flashed fire, and his face glowed with ardour. His was a true warrior soul.

“ ‘Colonel,’ said he, ‘it is through my fault that the company is brought into this danger; let it be mine to extricate it. Give me twenty men. I know the country round, and this morning I discovered a little by-path opening on a level space, from which we can turn the enemy’s right. You attack him in front, and in less than a quarter of an hour all that rabble will be cut to pieces or dispersed. If I remain alive, I will return and place myself at your disposal.’

“ ‘If you return alive,” I replied, “Cespedes will decide upon your case. Here is your sword, Polidoro, but be not rash; Cespedes will not deprive himself, for any whim, of an officer with such a future as yours before him.”

“ ‘I have no future, Colonel,’ he returned, gloomily. ‘I do not deceive myself with false hopes. Preferment is closed against me. I will die, at least, with honour, for *Cuba Libre*, and bear with me the regret of my chief.’

“ ‘Five men for the advance and fifteen more for the Lieutenant,” I cried out.

“ ‘All right, Colonel. You hold the centre and I the right, deployed as skirmishers—is that it?’

“ ‘Right!’

“The Spanish commander, not having perceived our movement, and there being only fifty men at most before him, pressed confidently forward, never doubting that he could easily compel us to lay down our arms. We waited until part of his men had reached

the foot of the mountain, and then we fell upon them in solid column; some of the men, being employed as skirmishers, attacked and drove back their left, and Polidoro, having gained his position, forced their right to retreat, shooting down all who had not rejoined the main body. Suddenly I heard the drums beat the charge behind me. It was a company led by Cespedes himself, who, fearing that I might be unable to enforce discipline, had come to my assistance.

"The Spaniard is brave, obstinate, and sober; inured to privations and fatigues. He will fight long and well behind a rock or wall, but in the open field he generally lacks steadiness, and is easily discouraged if he meets an unforeseen resistance in an attack. He will disband, to meet his fellows at some other point and plan some new surprise—the only species of warfare he conducts well. This, indeed, is the result of that provincial spirit of independence, of that character of individuality, which so deeply penetrates the masses, and forms the distinguishing characteristic of the nation.

"The panic soon became general, and the village was filled with wounded and dead.

"Those who fled from the fire of one party of our men were received on the bayonets of another, finding no outlet through which to make their escape; about a hundred of the Spaniards, however, succeeded in forcing their way, scattering as they went, and giving us a few parting shots. All the rest were taken. Cespedes forced his way to us, pitilessly shooting down all who refused to yield. He soon joined us, and cast his eyes towards the open trench.

" 'Aha!' he cried, darting a look of intelligence to

me; 'you are cautious, Colonel. You would not have the enemy know the number of your dead. How many?' asked he, in a low tone.

"Two, General; the lot unfortunately fell upon Sergeants Gasparini and Miemo."

"Cespedes could not restrain a gesture of vexation.

" 'And Polidoro?'

"My General, he escaped well! we were just going to shoot him when the skirmish commenced. He is now upon the mountain, where I can vouch he gave us some famous help."

" 'He is here,' said my companion, 'and in a sad condition. Here are his men bringing him in upon their muskets.'

"When he reached us, Polidoro raised his head, not without great pain, and lifting his still bantering glance to the face of Cespedes, who stood grave and motionless, he said, with an attempt at his old gaiety:

" 'Hit, General, hit! I am sorry, my General, that you can no longer break or even put me under arrest.'

" 'I will have chance enough to do both yet,' replied Cespedes, with an affected roughness which betrayed his anxiety to encourage the wounded soldier.

" 'Oh, General! my account is closed this time,' returned Polidoro. 'Six bullets through the body, and two of them, at least, through the lungs. 'Tis enough for one, General.'

" ' *Sancta Maria, mater Dei,*' he continued, in a tone still tinged with a sort of sorrowful gaiety, '*ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.*'

"Cespedes threw himself from his horse, and pressed a flask of brandy to the lips of the wounded lieutenant,

holding him up in his arms for a moment to help him to swallow a few drops.

"How kind you are to me! You seem to think that, in spite of my follies, I was not so bad an officer, after all. Keep, I pray you, my General, my sword in remembrance of me; only unfasten the sword-knot, and give it to Colonel McIver."

"A fit of coughing interrupted him, and then a bloody frothing appeared upon his lips. His features were pinched with pain—he gasped—his eyes grew glassy, and after a few slight convulsions, all that remained of Polidoro fell back in the General's arms.

"Cespedes took the lieutenant's sword, pulled the knot off and hastily handed it to me; then springing into the saddle he rode off at full gallop, without speaking a word or even turning his head.

"I have done," said McIver, "but the recollection of that event forms one of the little chapters in my life which, somehow, appears hard to forget even for a day. Since then some months have passed—I have become a soldier of fortune—but that event is always crowding upon my memory wherever I go."

"But, Colonel," said one of my lieutenants,—McEvelly—"how was it that your sands were nearly run in Cuba, as you told us?"

"Oh, that is another long story—too long to tell to-night; but we shall meet again, and then, perhaps, you may hear it."

Shortly afterwards, McIver left us for the night, having impressed us all as being a man of resolute purpose, but of kind disposition—a gentleman in quarters, a lion in the field.

CHAPTER IV.

It was the end of September. Paris was besieged, and the ill-conditioned garrison had made ineffectual sorties around the heights at Villejuif, and obtained some small successes at Dracy and St. Denis. Metz was in the grip of the Germans, and its garrison had commenced to eat horse-flesh. Toul had surrendered with 109 officers, 2240 men, and many guns. I saw the fortress afterwards. It had a double escarpment with full bastions, and was well casemated. There was no glacis, but a double moat, each ditch being about thirty feet wide all around the fortress. It was defended by seventy-five guns. All the troops of the invasion not engaged in the sieges of Paris and Metz were around the town. It suffered terribly from the bombardment. Things looked worse than they did at Sedan, but not so bad as at Bazeilles. The Gothic Church of St. Gengoult was in ruins, although the ancient cathedral was comparatively safe. The investment of Paris had been completed, and the only means of communication was by balloons. An army of 350,000 Germans was around the besieged city, while other large German detachments moved through France towards Rouen, Amiens, Tours and Lyons. Around Versailles, the begrimed walls of once beautiful châteaux stood silent sentinels of the devastations of war. Then Strasburg fell on the 27th, and a new German army was free to operate along the

Vosges. Nearly every house had been pierced with a shot, but the magnificent cathedral was almost uninjured. History had repeated itself, and Strasburg was once more at the mercy of its foes. Sacked by the Romans, pillaged by the Huns, seized by the Germans, captured by the French, Catholic and Protestant in turn, the history of Strasburg was a chequered one. But if France was almost prostrate, the German troops had suffered severely. Up to this time 1690 officers and 38,000 men had been killed and wounded, while France had lost in prisoners one marshal, thirty-nine generals, 3577 officers, 123,700 privates, 10,280 horses, at least fifty eagles, 102 mitrailleuses, 887 field and fortress guns, magazines, &c., &c. But the spirit of the nation was not dead yet, and the people were resolved to try a hopeless struggle for the mastery. Every day recruits came crowding into Caen, while we expected "the route" every hour.

The routine of barrack life was becoming monotonous, and the possibility of returning to Ireland without having smelled German powder was not of the most pleasing description. Drill continued with unabated ardour, and the spare hours on Sundays were occupied by making excursions into the country, where the most ignorant of the peasantry speculated on the nationality of the men, and, when discovered, wondered in "what portion of France Ireland was situated." Every Sunday morning, however, the company was marched to church, the Protestants pairing off to attend their own place of worship, while we attended the Church of St.

Etienne, with its Gothic façades and its historical recollections of William the Conqueror of England, by whom it was finished in 1077.

"Would you like to see the grave of the great departed, Monsieur?" said the church beadle to me after mass one Sunday.

I replied in the affirmative, and following my guide, he pointed to a plain grey marble slab in the pavement before the high altar, and said that that *was* the grave of William the Conqueror.

There was an emphasis on the word *was* that caught my attention; and upon enquiring if the remains had been removed, I heard that the grave had been for a long time empty, and that one thigh bone was all that was left of the once haughty subjugator of the Saxon race.

"You see, *Monsieur le Capitaine*," said the beadle, pointing to the slab, "the grave was broken open, and the beautiful monument erected over it was destroyed by the Huguenots in 1562,—the bones were scattered and lost without record, at the same time; while the Revolutionists of 1793 again violated the grave, when the last remnant of William the Conqueror—the thigh bone—disappeared with the rest." My guide was redolent with stories about the Normans and the conquests, and conducted me as far as the door of the church, while he pointed out the varied objects of interest around the Gothic cathedral.

Before the door the company had already fallen in, and a crowd of Frenchmen had collected around the spot. From some source or other, the hat was sent around, and the passing members of the congregation were appealed to by some enthusiasts from among

themselves for a subscription for the Irish Volunteers. Before the company could be numbered off and removed from the ground, a demonstrative-looking but respectful Frenchman came and offered me the contents of his hat, which I, however, firmly but respectfully declined. "The people are so much charmed with the Irish Volunteers, *Monsieur le Capitaine*," he said, "that we wish to give them some recognition of our esteem. And," he added, holding the hat up to me with about eighty or ninety francs huddled into its capacious crown, "if you will accept this little offering to buy tobacco for your men, we shall take it as a special favour."

At first I was disposed to be rude to the man who addressed me, and treat the matter as conveying a possible insult to the men. But the anxious expression on the countenance of the man who held the hat, and the interested and sympathetic look upon the faces of the people who had contributed the money, assured me that it was given in good faith, and with a desire to contribute to the comfort of the Irish soldiers. This tempered my refusal of the money, but I once more firmly declined to accept the gift,—at which there was some dissatisfaction and more disappointment amongst the sympathetic subscribers. The company was marched away, and still the man almost apologetically followed me, and repeated his assurance that no offence was meant to *les braves Irlandais*. In France each department looks after its own conscripts, and the people of Caen were anxious to adopt us as their children. The compliments were flattering, but I was obdurate,

and not until we got near our quarters did the gentleman leave me, disappointed but not defeated. From a few individuals the collection extended over the town until the promoters were assured, in tones of unswerving determination, that the Irish Volunteer would accept no favours, nor ask any exceptional treatment, beyond what was given to any simple soldier of the Line. This crowned our triumph in Caen. Henceforth we were the heroes of the hour, and the people were extravagant in the excess of their laudations.

But the fortunes of France had changed for the better in the early days of November, and we were impatiently expecting the route. No recruits arrived for the expected Irish regiment, and we should be content to take the field as we were—Irish company, just 100 men, all told. A ray of hope broke through the pall-like disasters of France in the early part of November. It was the hey-day of her chivalrous resistance. D'Aurelles de Paladine had converted the loose mass of Regulars, *Garde Mobiles* and *Franc-tireurs* into shape and consistency. He had proved himself at least a man with capacity for organization; and when he recaptured Orleans, and a portion of the army under his command won the victory at Coulmiers, every tongue in France was echoing his praises. Chevally and Artenev added to the rejoicings of the nation, and the cry of "*guerre à l'outrance*" was again taken up by the press and the people of the country. The excitement in France at this period was more intense than it had been since the capitulation of Sedan, and all Europe held its

breath when Baccon was carried by the French on the 11th of November and the Army of the Loire was declared to be in full march to the relief of Paris. It was then D'Aurelles de Paladine undoubtedly failed, and lost a brilliant opportunity of assisting, if not of relieving, the garrison of Paris.

Von Werder was pushing Garibaldi towards Lyons and the east, Manteuffel was moving upon Amiens on the north, the Grand Duke of Mecklenberg was marching towards Le Mans on the west, and Prince Frederick-Charles was sweeping down with 100,000 veterans fresh from the glories of Metz. And yet France was defiant. Before dying, the nation resolved to make another effort. Gambetta issued these ringing words to the troops:—

"To the Army of the Loire:

"Your courageous efforts recall victory to our cause. France owes her first ray of hope to you, and I offer you the public praise and gratitude for your reward. Recovering strength with discipline, you have retaken Orleans, inaugurating a glorious offensive. You are on the road to Paris, which awaits you! Our honour hangs on your loosening the grasp of these barbarians. Redouble your constancy and ardour, and you will overcome your enemies' superiority in cannon with French *élan* and patriotic fury. So will the Republic issue victorious from the struggle."

In the meantime the days passed heavily with us all. We were impatient to be in the field. Our neighbours, the *Franc-tireurs*, had already gone, and the municipal authorities gave them a brilliant ovation as they were departing. And then our turn came! There were two or three false starts, but

orders came at last, and on the 16th of November—a month all but one day from our arrival in Caen—we were to leave for Bourges, one of the great military arsenals in the centre of France. It was a joyous morning as the men fell in to take their departure. The few who had friends among the townspeople had already bidden them adieu. I had made the rounds of my hospitable entertainers in Caen, and all was ready for the start. The sun burst through a bank of clouds and shed its brilliant rays upon the jaunty *kepis* of the Irish soldiers, while they stood in line with ranks as carefully “dressed” as if they were preparing for a field-day. Around the gate through which we were to pass out of the barracks, the people of the town had assembled in goodly numbers, while the *Mobiles*, who occupied the remainder of the barracks, drew up to give us a farewell salutation. The Sergeant-major reported “all ready;” a few words of command followed, the Irish Volunteers faced the entrance of the barracks, and in another moment they were stepping out towards the gate. Then a cheer which shook the very buttresses of the old building rose from the ranks, was caught and repeated by the *Mobiles*, was taken up by the people outside, passed on to the ladies who stood on the balconies on our way, and swelled through the usually quiet streets of Caen. “*Vive, vive l’Irlande*,” shouted a thousand friendly Frenchmen. “*Vive, vive les Irlandais*,” saluted the ladies from the windows. “*Vive, vive les Volontaires*,” shouted the assembled multitude who awaited our departure at the railway. Then the bugles blew, the whistle shrieked, the spacious station

was filled with the cheers of the Irish soldiers, and we were off.

CHAPTER V.

Away once more over the historic plains of Normandy, and the "road of iron" points straight for the Loire. At all the intermediate stations, soldiers of every arm of the service crowded the platforms, hurrying to their various destinations. Ladies promenaded the spaces in front of the carriages, anxiously looking out for the "sick or wounded," and when found, administered to their wants with pious solicitude. At every station there appeared to be an organized system of relief for the victims of the war, or for such as the chances *de la guerre* had afflicted. On through Argentin and Alençon, the inland Belfast of France, and at about 4 P.M. we crowded into Le Mans, with all its picturesque interest, its marks of antiquity, its walls, its churches, and its active industry. Amongst the multiplicity of uniforms which caught the eye within the spacious station of Le Mans, the picturesque uniform of the Pontifical Zouaves attracted attention. Their loose grey costume, so elegantly made; their handsome gaiters, their bare necks and soldierly grace, made them in my eyes the best-looking, and as events proved, amongst the best of the bravest sons of France. Their heroic conduct at Orleans had already gained respect for the once-despised *soldats du Pape*, and afterwards their valour at Patay and Le

Mans covered them with glory,—and, at the end of the war, to be a *Zouave Pontifical* was to be distinguished for steady discipline and splendid valour. The brilliant bearing and silent devotion of these heroic men won for them the respect of their enemies. At Loigny, out of 350 men they left 207 dead and dying upon the field of battle. At Le Mans, some time after I saw them, they were told by General Gougard:—"Zouaves, you are heroes; to-day you have saved the army." Of six captains, on that day four were killed. And when in August, 1871, they were disbanded, the Minister of War said in his order of the day:—"The army thanks you, by my voice." Significant and glorious words. I often regretted that circumstances did not throw our lot in with the gallant Pontifical Zouaves, although we had been assured that we were to be attached to a corps not less distinguished, the Foreign Regiment, which was so fearfully decimated at the first battle of Orleans, when, out of 1500 men, they lost 1000 in one day's fighting. But the road was blocked, and we had a few hours to cultivate the acquaintance of the Pontifical Zouaves, and to see what was to be seen in Le Mans. The men had an opportunity of obtaining any luxury within the reach of their miserable pay, and of adding a few cakes or an orange to the scanty contents of their haversacks. Confined in a square, a crowd of the curious soon gathered around *les Irlandais*,—and more than one of the *bourgeois* asked me if there was anything they could do for the men. I would have been glad indeed if some one more generous than the rest had given acceptable refreshments

to the men without consulting me, but I was often reluctantly compelled to say that "the soldiers had all they required." Our stay in Le Mans enabled me to see the town, and examine the splendid cathedral, with its magnificent choir, which is said to be the finest in France. Along the streets, and in all the open spaces, men dressed in the semi-uniform usual amongst the *Garde Nationale* hurried to and fro, and impressed me with the conviction that they were as useless as they were unornamental. Near the railway station, however, I came upon a battery of artillery and two mitrailleuse guns, the working of which an artillery officer close by kindly showed me how to perform.

"You see, *monsieur*," said the artillery officer, when the hood was taken off the gun, "the mitrailleuse is a combination of many guns in one—a number of barrels in one tube; the trajectory is wonderfully flat, and it can discharge 300 balls a minute at a range of 1700 or 1800 metres."

"But have not the Germans a mitrailleuse also?" I asked of my informant.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "the *Kugelspritzen*. I think it is an American gun, which was called the Gatling, and was adopted by the Germans at the commencement of the war. Our gun," he added, placing his hand somewhat affectionately upon the piece, much as a jockey would upon the neck of favourite racer, "is thought to be an improvement on that. In the Gatling gun I saw in Paris there were ten barrels, made something like this, to revolve around a central axis, parallel to the

bores, by means of a hand-crank. As each barrel comes into position, a self-primed metal-case cartridge is pushed into its breech by a plunger, and is held there until exploded by the firing-pin. The cartridges fall by their own gravity through a hopper as fast as they can be supplied by hand, and the barrels are brought successively into position as fast as they can be turned by the crank."

"Do you think the Gatling superior to the Montigny?" I asked, seeing that I had an officer of the regular artillery to speak to, and from whom I might expect a full account of the various weapons then in use.

"Yes," he answered, "the results of the experiments I saw conducted were in favour of the Gatling. The Montigny has thirty-seven barrels, and yet it has neither the precision nor the rapidity of the Gatling."

"But the Germans have the superiority in field artillery," I said, half questioning, half assuring the artillery officer beside me. Just then the buglers blew the "fall in," and I was compelled to part with my informant. He, however, introduced me to the captain of a battery, who was going to Tours, and I willingly accepted his companionship on the route, as I was anxious to gain some more information about guns and gunnery on our way to the south.

As I moved towards the railway I met Sergeant Terence Byrne, who was evidently amused at some occurrence that had taken place. His usually calm and amiable countenance was beaming with pleasurable excitement, and upon enquiring the cause, he told me that one of the men had obtained permission to leave

the square, and had asked him what "Give me some more sugar" was in French. "I," continued Sergeant Byrne, "told him, and as I understand the man soon afterwards went into one of the *cafés* you must have passed, and asked for a 'tasse' of coffee. As usual, the waiter brought two or three small pieces of sugar upon a miniature dish or saucer, and placed them before the sweet-toothed Irishman, who was however dissatisfied with the quantity, and then put his 'give me some more sugar' into requisition. The *garçon* was hurried at the time, and replied '*Tout de suite, Monsieur, tout de suite.*' This, the Irishman only partially heard, and he bawled out that it was not 'too sweet, nor half sweet enough,' forgetting that he might as well be speaking Sanscrit to a Newcastle 'pit man' as English to a French waiter. It required all my authority," continued Sergeant Byrne, "to quiet the indignant Irishman, who, in the end, courteously admitted his error, and parted on the best of terms with the surprised *garçon*." In all probability the poor Frenchman has often since bothered his brains in vain endeavours to guess the cause of the Irishman's indignation, and "*tout de suite, tout de suite,*" became a standard joke amongst the Irish soldiers for many a long day afterwards, and with the victim himself, when the sergeant told him that it meant, "just now, just now."

But we were soon in the railway carriages again, and as the train moved out of Le Mans at 6 P.M. mutual cheers passed between the Pontifical Zouaves and the Irish Volunteers. I was glad to find that my acquaintance, the artillery officer, who was going to

Tours, was seated beside me, and with Lieutenants Cotter and M'Alevey, and Dr. Macken, had the carriage to ourselves. The train rattled on for "Black Angers," as the once capital of Anjou was called. My *compagnon de voyage*, the artillery officer, was instructively communicative, and upon my enquiring if it was true that the Prussian artillery was so much superior to our own, he gave me a lengthened dissertation upon the various claims of the breech and muzzle loading guns.

"You see," he said, placing the under portion of the forefinger of his right hand upon the under portion of the forefinger of his left hand, and using them as a kind of mechanical lever to impress the force of his reasoning the more effectually upon one's memory, "the Prussian artillery is entirely breech-loading, while ours is as entirely muzzle-loading. But I do not think it is on that account that the Prussians are superior. It is principally their greater weight, and consequent longer range, that has given the Germans the advantage in all our artillery duels. They have managed to use heavier guns than ours, but I am still of opinion, that for field artillery, or indeed for all artillery, that muzzle-loaders are the best. There is a powerful simplicity in the solid gun, which appears, as far as artillery science yet enables us to judge, incompatible with a breech-loader. At Sedan, however, our artillery practically ceased to exist before the close of the fight. The fact is, the Germans seldom engage our infantry before they try to crush us with a shower of projectiles. And now things are worse, when the majority of our artillery is manned

by *Mobiles*, who only shoot the cannon, while the Germans aim. On the march the German infantry generally skirt the roads in small parties close together, leaving the highway for the artillery and baggage wagons—an order analogous to that of a battalion in battle. The method is more fatiguing, but the march is effected at once, time is gained, and the formation of the line is more rapid."

"But are there no breech-loading guns in our artillery?" I asked, anxious to know if the French depended entirely upon the muzzle-loading system.

"Oh, yes," replied the artillery officer, "some of our heaviest siege guns, throwing enormous shells three feet long, are breech-loaders, grooved on the 'Stead' principle. The German shells are coated in lead, and, in their passage through the gun, the lead is forced from off that portion which is cut by the grooves. They generally use the percussion fuse, which, however, is somewhat defective. If the ground is soft, the German shells often strike without exploding, and it requires the shell to strike its nose against some hard substance to insure an explosion. The Germans too, carry their artillery reserve men into action on axle-tree seats, by which means they secure a full supply of trained gunners; while we," he added, with a peculiar shrug of his shoulders and a slight pouting of his lips, "carry them on the wagons, which is by no means as convenient, nor as safe."

"But we have the advantage in small arms, at least," I said, anxious to catch some ray of hope from the general gloom.

"I don't know that," said the artillery officer, much

to my surprise. "The weapons we are getting now are of inferior metal, and the superior range only tempts the unsteady *Mobiles* to throw away their ammunition at long ranges. The German gun is only sighted for 800 metres, while the Chassepot is sighted for 1200. But it is a doubtful advantage in the hands of troops only partially disciplined. Besides, after ten or twelve rounds the breech of the Chassepot becomes clogged with a thick, fatty substance, proving that the cartridges do not clean the barrel *in transitu*. The breech of the Needle-gun or the Dreysa also becomes coated a little, but not near so much as the Chassepot. The cartridges of our guns, as you are aware, are enveloped in a fine linen cloth, with a superabundance of grease; while the German cartridges are enveloped in paper, which leaves the breech cleaner and more easily worked. After a few rounds from the Chassepot the breech must be wet, either by water, or snow, or by spittle, or even by wine from the men's *bidons*, so as to get it to work with any kind of order. But the trajectory of the Chassepot is flatter, it is much lighter, and it is, mechanically, a much more ingenious weapon, than the clumsy Dreysa."

"But I have heard that the Bavarian Werder rifle is much superior to the Prussian Zundnadelgewehr?" I said.

"Oh, much," he replied, "its calibre is smaller, its range is greater, its fire more accurate, and its construction more simple."

But day wore into night, and still the train dashed on through the dark damp atmosphere, while my companion and myself, by common accord, rolled in

our regimental great-coats, each seeking a corner of the carriage, and courted the drowsy god. Station after station was passed in the gloom, and ever and anon the shouts and songs from out of the long line of carriages filled with troops, swelled away upon the calm, moist air. Above the rest, the strains of Irish national songs were often distinguishable, and the soul-stirring air of O'Donnell-a-boo, often blended in melodious revelry with the revolutionary, spirit-stirring Marseillaise. Occasional stoppages *en route* gave rise to speculation, and at one place two of the Irish Volunteers, having missed the train, were left behind penniless and friendless in the heart of France. I have often thought the adventures of those men would form an interesting chapter to a compiler of the realities of the war; but I afterwards heard that one of them was reported shot at Orleans, and that the other was attached to the staff of some colonel in Tours. The earliest streaks of daybreak, however, still found us hurrying on. Away over the fertile valley of the Loire, on, on, the road of iron still points for Tours, where Gambetta then ruled it with dictatorial sway. But the day had scarcely burst into "all-truthful light," when the train gradually slackened its speed, and the numerous railway tracks gave us assurance that we were at Tours, the charms of which I afterwards thought were greatly overrated. A walk about the town gave me an opportunity of seeing the *renaissance* style of architecture with which the city abounds, and of recalling its historic associations, as one of the league of sixty-four Gallic towns, which, under Vercingetorix, opposed the

devastating march of Julius Cæsar. Here too were places associated with Mary Queen of Scots, and her short-lived husband Francis. It was here that the Saracens were overwhelmed by Charles Martel in 732, and the tide of Moslem triumphs was forever met, checked, and overcome. Like all French towns, Tours has its cathedral. It was commenced in 1150 and finished in 1550. Tours had often been the refuge of royalty, and it was soon to become the refuge of the chiefs of the Republic. The town was crowded with troops of all arms, and detachments of *Franc-tireurs* guarded some Bavarians inside the station, who had been taken prisoners at Orleans. These prisoners bore themselves with the ease of true soldiers, and impressed one favourably as they stood in groups around the room allotted to themselves. There were two officers, one of whom was mortally wounded. He had a bayonet wound in the stomach, the weapon nearly penetrating through the back. His agony must have been intense. A French doctor was bending over the prostrate man, while his companion in arms soothed the rough pillow on which his head rested, as gently as a woman. Now and again an agonizing groan would break from his lips, and fixing his eyes upon the uniforms of the Frenchmen around, he appeared to stifle the pain he was enduring, before his foes. His companion, rough-visaged and one-armed, a colonel in rank, decorated with the Iron Cross, and bearing upon his person all the evidences of military distinction, failed to hide the tears that ran down his weather beaten face when his young friend whispered something into his ear. I heard the

story of that young man's life in a few hours after, when his soul had gone before his God, and when the grave had secured its victory. It was the old story—love, marriage, a young family, war, and then—death. And this was the end of his dream of the “pomp and circumstance of glorious war.” This was the end for him, but not for those he left in despair. *Here* was death, *there* was worse than death—life without the husband, the father, and the friend. No “storied urn or monumental bust” could “back to its mansion call” the happiness which that young wife once experienced, and, as the old Colonel recited to me that tale of sorrow, I could not contain an expression of regret, and it required all my strength to use the then hackneyed phrase,

“ Mais à la guerre,
Comme à la guerre.”

But 7 a.m. came at last, the Irish Volunteers filed into the train, and we were soon bowling along through the vineyards of Cher. Vierzon with its associations of Richard I., of England, and of the Black Prince, who pillaged the town in the middle of the fourteenth century, was soon passed, and then we quickly rattled into Bourges, our destination for the time being. To fall in on the platform, and under the direction of a soldier who undertook our escort, to move on through the town, with a few idlers upon our flanks, vaguely guessing as to what part of the habitable earth we came from, occupied but a short time. The worthy official whose duty it was to provide for our subsistence and quarters, appeared troubled at our

arrival, and it required no secrets from his prison house to see that he was unprepared for the rush of troops that was constantly pouring into the capital of Cher. Bourges was, indeed, full of soldiers; and their various officers were patiently waiting for the *Intendance*, to allot quarters to their respective commands. Linesmen, Artillerymen, Cuirassiers, *Franc-tireurs*, *Mobiles*, and all branches of the army were represented around the *Intendance bureau*. At last we got our papers, and it transpired that we were to be quartered in some sheds near the railway station, and which had just been erected by a detachment of men who left several of their numbers behind from small-pox.

The quarters of the men were by military courtesy called "barracks," but they were indeed unworthy of the name. Gaps wide enough to admit of the passage of a Chassepot, divided the narrow planks of which the "barracks" were built. Through every part of the sheds the frosty air penetrated with a numbing effect. The cold was more severe than I ever remember experiencing in Ireland, and the only protection the soldiers had was a miserable single blanket, about four feet by three. It was satire to call such a rag a *couverture*. It was not large enough to envelope an ordinary man from the waist upwards, while the body was left completely at the mercy of a frost five degrees below zero. Such was Paradise to Bourges. The cold, too, continued to increase in intensity, and the misery of the men became proportionately greater. The inexperienced soldiers thought that they had arrived at the "lowest

depth," while the experienced gravely shook their heads with ominous forebodings. The officers were, as usual, allowed to find quarters in town, a duty generally undertaken by the orderlies, who foraged for lodgings while the officers were occupied arranging the disposition of the company.

But the disasters of the army of the Loire were quickly visible in Bourges. I was standing in front of our quarters in the early days of December, when the first dribblets of the routed 15th Corps appeared at the further end of the town, having come pell mell from Orleans. Dr. Macken, Lieutenant M'Alevey, Lieutenant Cotter, and myself, were together, and as the miserable gangs of soldiers huddled passed us, we were moved to compassion for their misfortunes. Many of the men's feet were tied up in the folds of the patches of tent cloth. Clotted blood stained the rags that enveloped them. The clothes of the men, in some cases, hung in tatters from their persons, and old dirty handkerchiefs were tied around many of their heads. Numbers appeared without their packs, and even a few without arms or ammunition.

"No eye hath ever seen such scarecrows," said Mr. M'Alevey. "Even Falstaff's ragged regiment with its one shirt made of two napkins tacked together, could not have been a more motley crew. And yet those *Mobiles*," he continued, with something akin to admiration in his tone, "are a fine looking lot of men, but I hear that some of them are as dangerous to their friends as to their enemies."

"Yes," said Dr. Macken, "the aphorism of Richelieu, that—

'In the lexicon of youth,
There is no such word as fail.'

may stir those men to accomplish something yet."

"I like the pithy aphorism of Louis the Eleventh better than that," replied Mr. M'Alevey—

"It is not the lion's skin
France needs, but the fox's."

It is organization and diplomacy that will save the country."

The defeated soldiers looked, however, hardy enough to encounter any storm. Their faces were bronzed to a sombre hue, but their miserable shoes were melting from off their feet, and their entire condition was wretched in the extreme. But it might be our own fate any day.

The regiment which we were to join had retreated on Bourges, and with the rest of the 15th Corps hurried on to the encampment outside the town. It was to us a matter of much congratulation that we were to form part of the regular army, and not to be attached to any of the many nondescript corps which were organized for the defence of the country.

I must have been thinking on some such subject a few days after the retreat of the 15th Corps through Bourges, for I only indistinctly heard a gentleman, who stood suddenly before me, and begging a "thousand apologies," asked if "we were the Irish Volunteers?" I of course answered in the affirmative, and immediately found my hand in the unceremonious

but friendly grip of my newly-found acquaintance. He turned out to be a man of some importance in Bourges, and eagerly asked the officers to come and accept the hospitality of his table on the following day. "For" said he in broken English, "I am married to an Irish lady, and she has been charmed to see your soldiers march to mass so regularly every Sunday morning." This sealed the matter. We all accepted the invitation, and found a goodly assembly of the *élite* of the town to meet us under the hospitable roof of our entertainer. The religious demeanour of the Irish soldiers had charmed the Catholic people of Bourges, and they were determined to mark their appreciation of our conduct after a fashion of their own. They knew we were about to join our regiment in the field in a few days, and they resolved upon a religious ceremonial in the magnificent cathedral on the following Sunday. Our Irish lady friend, assisted by her amiable daughters, and some sympathetic neighbors, had ninety scapulars of the *Sacré Cœur* made for presentation to the Catholics of the corps. The ecclesiastical authorities entered warmly into the spirit of the demonstration. The Prince Archbishop of Bourges received the officers of the corps in the palace, and spoke in warm and generous tones of the attachment between France and Ireland. He spoke of the memories of the Old Brigade, and touched our hearts by the fervour of his utterances. The accomplished prelate appeared to be deeply touched by the memory of the half-million of Irishmen who had lost their lives for France, from the time of the campaign in Flanders in 1691, to the last

record of the Brigade at the end of the eighteenth century. Then France was triumphant and held the nations of Europe in perpetual awe. But the "sweet uses of adversity" had "proved Ireland to be the best friend of France in the hour of her humiliation, and France could never forget the generous offerings and spirited devotedness of "*les braves Irlandais*." And so we were feasted with utterances which fell deep into the crevices of our memories, and which to this day, the few who heard them, remember with pleasure and still treasure with venerable esteem.

But Sunday came! The magnificent cathedral was thronged with the *bourgeoisie* of the town. The splendid flight of steps approaching the finely recessed portals, ornamented with bas-reliefs in rows of niches, were crowded with people who came to see the spectacle. It was a solemn scene. After mass was celebrated the Irish Volunteers were brought inside the spacious railings beside the altar. The exquisite colour which was produced by the great quantity of stained glass, threw a singularly mellow light upon the ranks of the kneeling Irishmen, as they bent in pious fervour before the altar. The immense length of the interior of the cathedral, unbroken by transepts, was sufficiently well filled to give additional interest and *éclat* to the solemn ceremony. An old clergyman, who undertook the distribution of the scapulars, could only speak a little English, but the utterances of the pious man appeared to sink deeper into the hearts of the kneeling soldiers, as the words were faintly and almost inarticulately spoken. There were, no doubt, amongst the people who thronged the Church, some

sceptical minds who sneered at the giver and receiver of what to them was a piece of cloth and nothing more. But the manner with which the men received the scapulars was modest, and as they bent their heads, the old priest said: "Vous are no longer strangers; vous are Frenchmen."

Yes, no matter whether sceptical manhood does or does not believe in the sacred influence which Catholics attach to everything calling to mind the life of Him who suffered for us all; no matter if some non-Catholics regard those holy emblems as deserving of nothing but contempt, yet the *Agnus Dei* or *Sacré Cœur*, very often affect the conduct and character of men so much as to draw them from evil to good. If these emblems do this, why should non-Catholics object to them? Let non-Catholics call it a superstition if they will, yet the fact remains, that with Catholics these sacred emblems work much good, and tend to the purification of their general conduct. Apart altogether from any spiritual effect which Catholics believe there is attendant upon these possessions, there is the purely secular result of placing a check upon unlicensed thought and act, by the associations of the scapular. The Catholic Irishmen who that day knelt at the foot of the splendid altar in the Cathedral of Bourges, were better men, and certainly were not the worse soldiers, for the possession of the *Sacré Cœur*. The effect of the ceremony on the bystanders was marked, and many French soldiers, *Regulars*, *Mobiles*, and *Franc-tireurs*, knelt in pious worship before the altar, and begged a few scapulars that still remained in the

hands of the priest. But the ceremony was soon over, the company left the church, fell in before the massive doorways, and was soon quickly marching through the town, their regular steps, neatly dressed sections, and erect bearing, contrasting singularly enough with the loping gait of the *Mobiles*.

The next morning the cannon factory was visited. Papers were duly inspected at the gate, the governor of the arsenal kindly condescended to show us over the building, and to point out the different phases in the manufacture of field and siege artillery. The casting and boring of brass guns were minutely shown to us by the governor; but there was a listless expression upon his countenance, as if each day might herald the advent of the devastating Germans, who, under Prince Frederick Charles, were reported as advancing on Bourges.

"Your corps is, I believe, the 15th," he said, turning to me as I was watching a great block of brass turning slowly and steadily around. "You will, probably, be retained for the defence of Bourges, as we cannot afford to let this foundry fall into the enemies' hands."

Upon this subject I was, however, in perfect darkness; and then the governor took up the talking, and I was glad to obtain information from a man who was, no doubt, well informed.

"Of course you know that the army of the Loire is now divided into two commands, and that Bourbaki has been given one half, and Chanzy the other," he continued, as we walked through the arsenal.

"So I have heard," I replied. "But what do you think of Bourbaki?" I asked.

"Well, he's a type of what is known as the *furieux français*, a man who creates difficulties in order to surmount them; but as a strategist, he is an untried man," replied the governor.

"And of Chanzy," I ventured to ask, fearing, however, that he might hesitate to draw an invidious comparison.

"Oh, Chanzy?" he said, without a shadow of reserve, "Chanzy has shown more military capacity than any general who has as yet been tried on the Loire. It was he who really won the battle of Coulmiers, on the 9th of November, and it was the left wing under his command that fought at Patay on the 1st of December—the only creditable performance of the army of the Loire in several days previous to its retreat from before Orleans. It was at Patay, too, that the Pontifical Zouaves covered themselves with glory; when for hours the gallant battalion, only 600 strong, under the shadow of their sacred flag, stemmed the tide of a perfect avalanche of Germans. Chanzy has turned at bay now, and is, as no doubt you know, fighting with bull-dog ferocity, refusing to acknowledge himself beaten, and leaving a large tract of country strewn with dying and with dead. The Duke of Mecklenburgh and Von der Tann are pressing him with desperate persistency, but Chanzy is proving himself to be fully a match for his foes, and only the other day he, by a singularly creditable movement, extricated himself from a dangerous position." And so our distinguished informant went on, and seemed quite at home as he discussed every phase of the war.

"Is it true, as reported, that Herr Krupp has manufactured a balloon gun, with a horizontal range of 2000 feet?" I asked.

"Well, I have heard something of it," replied the governor. "And, indeed, I see no great difficulty in the way of making such a gun, particularly as the Germans require them so much about Paris. Indeed ballooning, as an art of war, is still in its infancy. With a telegraphic communication from the aeronaut to *terra firma*, balloons should be of immense service, until counter balloons come and engage in deadly strife in mid air. And 'great will be the fall thereof,' as I think your Shakspeare says, if one of the combatants come headlong to the ground." And the speaker indulged in that quiet humour which often tempts men to smile at imaginary disaster.

But the gloom of the evening was gathering around us, and we took our departure, after partaking of the welcome refreshments in the governor's house. The cathedral stood before us; its massive body throwing a sombre hue around, while its giant towers stood out against the already fading day, like the huge sentinels raising their anxious heads high above their slumbering companions around. A bitter wind swept the open space in front of the church, and dashed in fretful gusts adown the narrow thoroughfares of the town. Under the shadow of the cathedral I had to leave my guide: he to seek comfort in the bosom of his family, I to the quarters of the men, to see that all was right for the night. Yes, all was right with the Irish Volunteers! The cold swept through the embrasures of the wooden structure sufficiently strong

and bitter to cause the hardiest campaigner to chatter his teeth in a kind of frosty melody.

"The cows in those parts should give ice cream," I heard a soldier say to a companion, as they bent over the last flickering effort of a fire in the throes of death.

"Yes, that 'ill come to pass," said Timothy Marks, who joined the shivering pair, "when the Millennium, I have heard preached of, comes showering milk, honey, happiness, and whiskey on our heads."

"What is the Millennium, Marks," said a broad-shouldered Tipperary man, Timothy Larkin, as he seriously scanned the countenance of the quizzical Marks.

"The Millennium? Is it chaffing me you are Larkin," replied Marks, half doubtingly. "Well, at all events, the Millennium is the time when the lion is going to lie down in peace and harmony with the lamb."

"Then, bedad, I think we will have the ice cream from the cows before that; for I suspect when the lion comes to move, the lamb would be missing," replied Larkin, with the self-satisfied expression of a man who had placed a period to all discussion upon a doubtful question. I paused beside the door sufficiently long to hear just that one repartee from amidst the men who thronged the frail shelter, and then as I turned to leave for my lodgings in the town, the sergeant of the week, Frank Byrne, stood before me with the melancholy intelligence that one of the company, Laurence Breen, had that day died of small-pox.

The first of the Irish Volunteers had died for France! If Laurence Breen had fallen amidst the "pomp and circumstances of glorious war;" if he had died while facing the foe in the intoxicating whirl of battle, he could not have rendered up his life more truly for France than he did in the small-pox ward of the hospital at Bourges. There is, indeed, a savage, but still human, satisfaction, in selling life so dearly, that even in defeat, it makes the enemy purchase a Cadmean triumph. But the sacrifice is all the same; and the record of the "died in hospital," is not, or at least should not be, a less brilliant or less melancholy roll, than the list of "killed and wounded." To go down amidst the intoxicating shout of victorious troops, to feel the dull, heavy "thud" of the messenger of death, while all around

"Battle's magnificently stern array,"

spurs on the faltering, and gives life and energy to the action of the brave, may be a more glorious end to a soldier's career, than to render up life in the calm, still exclusion of an hospital ward. "But it is all the same," as I heard somebody say, when speculating upon a similar topic. "Be merry, and wise, and sing,

'King death is a rare old fellow,
He sits where no sun does shine,
He lifts up his hand so yellow,
And he pours out his coal black wine.'

Away with reverie, for the next morning, the 12th December, we were to be in the field.

Then the hurry of departure followed. The little quarters of the Irish Volunteers was soon alive with

the bustle of preparation, and as the men fell in, I detected a pleased expression trace itself like a wave of satisfaction along the line. Fully armed and equipped for the field, the Irish soldiers looked admirable indeed. Their neat gaiters were as white as the flakes of snow which very gently fell upon the quarters the men had just vacated. Their Chassepots were clean in every part, and ninety rounds of ammunition were safely secured in the pouch of each of the men. Their tins, and pots, and cooking utensils, were all in order, and then a word of command, another, and another, and we passed out of our temporary shelter, to take our chances in the field. On through Bourges, marching to the stirring strains of "God save Ireland," while the people of the town gape with distended eyes at the martial bearing of the Irish Volunteers; on through the narrow streets where ladies wave an adieu, which the officers return. The Artillery Barracks were reached, one hundred stragglers of the regiment picked up, and then away once more, wading through lines of gun carriages, over muddy roads, and then the country opens; the men march at ease, and we feel that at last we shall soon be face to face with the stern realities of the soldier's life in the field.

CHAPTER VI.

"One murder makes a villain,
Millions a hero. Princes are privileged
To kill, and numbers sanctify the crime."

BEILLEY PORTEUS.

Away over the dreary roads which skirt the river Cher. Away to new scenes and to new associations. Dead and dying horses occasionally dot the way, while groups of famished soldiers hacked at the still warm carcasses with ravenous haste. The quivering flesh of poor Dobbin was being hewn into patches by the hungry soldiers of the army of the Loire. The flesh on the hind quarters of the dead horses was in nearly every case cut from the bones, and from out the steaming kettles which were everywhere visible, the savoury odour of hashed *cheval* flavored the sharp keen air. The troops were encamped on either side of the road, and the small dirty weather-beaten tents skirted our route deep into the woods beyond; columns of smoke from 20,000 camp fires darkened the atmosphere, and hung like a pall over the encampment. The voice of 100,000 men raised around the place a noise such as an angry sea makes, as it rolls in crested violence against the shore. But our Brigade was at the furthest end of the encampment. On to La Chapelle through broken fields, and thousands of *tentes d'abris* where the bronzed countenances of the

hardy soldiers, looked with compassion upon the clean gaiters, polished accoutrements, and shining appurtenances of the Irish Volunteers. There was something stirring and splendidly real in the appearance of the soldiers, between whose lines we hurried on to find our own Brigade. At last our division, the 1st of the 15th Corps, was found, and then our Brigade, the 2nd, and then our regiment, encamped upon a slimy soil, to which the men appeared quite accustomed. Behind the encampment the tall spires of the Church of St. Chapelle reared their graceful heads, while the setting sun imparted a dazzling brilliancy to the windows of the church and convent, in which my fancy saw a type of ardent Christian faith, that can make life endurable under the most trying circumstances. *There* was peace and contentment—here was war and misery. *There* pious men trod the paths of virtue to the grave—here men, intoxicated and maddened with sights and deeds of carnage, trod the ground where the soil was fattened with the flesh and blood of humanity. But away with philosophical cant. I have but little faith in the “sweet uses of adversity” when applied to present ailment. In toil or pain, philosophy is a poor comfort.

We had scarcely drawn up in our *alignment* when Colonel Canat, with three or four officers around him, was seen walking quickly towards us, and then he extended to me his hand, and gave it an unusually vigorous shake for a Frenchman.

“You are welcome,” he said, looking up to me with a warm expression tracing its lines around his handsome and weather-beaten face. “I have been

expecting you for some time. You should have been at Orleans, only I suppose, as usual, the *Intendance* did not know what to do with you. How many men have you, Captain?" he added, glancing at the stalwart ranks of the Irish Volunteers with an expression which I thought bore some evidence of admiration upon its lines.

"Ninety-nine, *mon Colonel*," I replied, moving with him to the right of the company which I saw he was about to inspect.

"Oh, you Irishmen are very big men. Now, I suppose you know that you are to act as a company in my regiment. You are to be *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, or Ze Irish Cumpanee," and the old man laughed at his attempt to articulate a few words in English. A trace of pleasantness passed over the features of the French officers around, and then moved by some spirit of brotherly fraternity which influences comrades in arms, they all shook hands with myself, my lieutenants, and the doctor. And then, too, our new *Commandant* appeared upon the scene. He was a chubby little man, with a countenance brimful of cheerfulness, and his rotundity of person indicated very plainly his antipathy to a rigid observance of the fast. Obesity may not be, indeed hardly ever is, the result of gluttony, but then there is a satisfied expression over the countenances of men whose appetite is appeased and whose soul is animated with a desire to carry off the first prize in the estimation of the *cuisinier*. That night, however, the *Commandant* invited the Irish officers to accept the hospitality of his quarters, and the share of the contents of his camp-

kettle. Rumour, indeed, whispered strange stories of our *Commandant*, and said that he frequently suffered from the influence of "wet groceries," as one of the men of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* interpreted the common phrase "tipsy." But Herodotus tells us that the ancient Persians had a custom of devising their political (and, perhaps, military) schemes, while inebriated, and of executing them when sober. So our *Commandant* may have been wise in his generation, while he was certainly an exception to all the French officers with whom I came in contact. Yet he had his virtues, upon which, however, he did not place sufficient reliance to bring their own reward. I suppose it was the correct etiquette for the *Commandant* to invite the Irish officers to his table, and that it was equally correct for the Irish officers to accept the offer, as their camp service was not in the best of working order. The little cottage where he was located was, like all French cottages, neat and orderly. A handsome walnut chest of drawers, a large walnut wardrobe, well stocked with linen and calico, two neatly furnished beds, and a look of cleanliness about all the culinary appointments, gave an air of comfort and thriftiness to the kitchen. There was, however, another room, where everything was more handsomely arranged, and ponderous curtains, shadowed a bed which looked deep enough to swallow our little *Commandant*, beyond his depth in feathers. All those things were new to us, but they were familiar to our host. We improved the occasion by finding out our position in the regiment.

"You see," said the little man, looking at us with the air of an experienced soldier, "there are five battalions

in our regiment. but only the 1st, 2nd, and 5th, are in France, the other two are still in Algiers, because the men being principally composed of Germans, the Government would not trust them here."

To an inquiry of mine, the *Commandant* told me that there were eight companies in each battalion, and that on an average, the number of men ranged from a minimum of 80 to a maximum of 160. This gave the commander of a battalion in the French army more men than the Colonel of an English Regiment. Then stories of battles, lost and won, passed around, and our first night in the field passed comfortably for all. At last we left our entertainer, in order to seek our quarters. This was a somewhat difficult task.

The night was as dark as Erebus, and it was not without some difficulty that we succeeded in navigating our way among the numerous baggage-waggons; at last, however, our quarters were reached. Four of us were to occupy two beds in an upper chamber of a dilapidated inn, the under portion of which was crammed with *Mobiles*, stretched out upon the boards in all conceivable attitudes, from the "spread eagle," to the "teaspoon." A sickly tallow candle illuminated our quarters, and just made its filthy beds perceptible to the eye. McAlevey rolled over the scanty blankets, and handling the pillow, swore that it was a most unsightly "knapsack for a soldier." And then he rolled the bed clothes over his head, and very soon a vigorous snore announced that he was in dreamland. Mr. Cotter extinguished the light, and all was quiet, save, indeed, what some German author calls "the artillery of sleep."

The *reveille* was sounded under our dilapidated quarters the following morning before daybreak; we quickly hurried out, and made our way to the encampment, where sickly fires were already sending spiral columns of smoke up through the calm, still, cold atmosphere. A hurried repast of biscuits and coffee, the regiment moved on, and we stepped out to take our first long march. The soldiers of "*La Compagnie Irlandaise*" did not look altogether in holiday attire after their first night upon the slimy soil near St. Chapelle. The stains of the campaign had already begun to leave their marks upon the uniforms of the men, but the jovial spirit of their race was still visible in their countenances as they stood in line preparatory to their first day's work. The bugles blew, and the men moved on, the Irish soldiers in rear, as the last company of the last battalion of the *Regiment Etranger*.

Over the broken fields, torn up with our train of waggons, and when passing a village two leagues on the road the "halt" was sounded, while the road appeared blocked with troops. We were still only a few miles from Bourges, and the grand old towers of the Cathedral stood well out in the pure, clear atmosphere of Central France. The sky was of a pale blue, and painfully transparent, as it caused the eyes to blink when looking into space. The sun appeared bright in its weakness, for no intervening clouds darkened its disc. Looking across the deserted encampment, thousands of smouldering fires were sending up small columns of smoke, which contrasted against the forest of evergreens beyond; the village

dogs were prowling about the place, and an occasional bird of prey would swoop on pinioned wings over the plain. The day before nearly 100,000 men had encamped between the village where we halted and Bourges, and now we were the last of the army of the Loire that had not departed. The road was blocked with troops, and we had to bide our time. "*Sac-a-terre! Sac-a-terre!*" blew out the regimental bugles, and the men took off their packs and passed the time as best they could. Even after so short a march, a halt was needful. The men's boots were so wretchedly bad, that the pebbles worked into them after the first kilometre had been passed over, and every halt was utilised in bandaging blistered feet, or stuffing wads of old garments into the gaping holes in the shoes. I was sitting on a soldier's knapsack, when Lieutenant Cotter touched me on the shoulder, calling my attention to a pale young Frenchman, who was wrapping his frozen feet in some mashed turnips, which he had begged from a neighbouring house; the flesh was almost falling from the bones and it was only by the aid of a companion that he could finish the sickening task. The shoes were tied under the feet like a sandal, and the soldier took his rifle and limped away, for march he should, every man was wanted, and above all the men who had seen so much of the tough work as he and his comrades of the Foreign Regiment already had. It had not come to that with any of my men yet, but that pale young Frenchman was but the precursor of many an Irish soldier whom I afterward saw in the same plight. Somehow, I gave way to the refuge of thought—reverie

—that 13th of December, 1870. I thought not of home, but of friends; not of hearths, but hearts; not of places so much as of people, and had gone into the reminiscences of the past, when that villainous regimental bugle went off again.

"That's for the sergeant of the week," said Lieutenant Cotter, counting the three notes at the end of the call.

Away down the battalion a murmur of voices was heard, and came nearer, until at last it reached the head of the Irish company. Ah! there was the explanation, as the sergeant of the week appeared with a bundle of letters and papers under his arm. "*Billets, billets*" shouted the Frenchmen; "letters, letters," said the Irishmen, and soon the sergeant was surrounded with a hundred eager faces, each hoping, yet almost dreading, for news from the dear old land. Then followed the oft-told tale—"Mother's dead, Katty's married, or Jimmy's gone away," or perhaps the affectionate little colleen, who had sworn fidelity and love, had ceased to entertain any recollection but "rememberance" of the past, had forgotten her pledge, and told the lover that he should forget it too.

Somehow I fancy that soldiering develops all the sentiment of our nature. In his natural state man is essentially a sentimental being. It is our civilization that makes us cynics: it is our refinement that develops the criticism of doubt. But war against his kind is certainly not opposed to the instincts of man, and he becomes less artificial when engaged in the bloody game. There may be nothing of sentimental romance in sleeping in a scooped-out snow-drift, living on half

rations, or marching with bleeding feet and broken shoes over the jagged edges of a newly-made road, but there *are times* when it is easier to touch the heart of a soldier than it is that of a man engaged upon a less hazardous game. Napoleon was affected by the whining of a dog over its master's corpse after Marengo, and thought the brute might teach mankind a lesson in fidelity. Bayard was the tenderest and most chivalrous of men.

And so it was when letters were distributed. I often thought I detected a merry eye grow dull, or a joyous heart become sad, after the contents of the *vague-maitre's* bundle had been read and thought over. When men's lives hang by threads, friends become dearer, and the affection of son and father, of husband, lover, or brother, ripen into something akin to adoration. It is not love, for that has been truly esteemed as "an empty sound, the modern fair one's jest;" but it is such a feeling as the angels have when the penitent sinner comes to judgment. War develops many of the good, and many of the bad qualities in our nature, makes us partly fiends, and partly gods. Perhaps, I was a little touched myself that December morning; perhaps the letter marked *Couvent des Ursulines, Thildonck, Wespelaar, Belgique*," and signed, "Ever your fond sisters," caused me to feel a little queer about the region of the heart, and if a moist eye be a coward's sign, then was I a coward. If I brooded over the past, if I treasured the affection of those whose letter I received, thought of their future if the chances of war went against me, was it a crime if I left my companion and wished to be alone? I know it is customary

...in this cynical age to sneer at this sort of thing as "sentimental trash"; but everyone to his taste, and according to his experience. For me, I just now remember some of the best men I ever knew, and they were not quite free from this feeling. But, to come to the practical, just allow me to put my letter safely into the most secure part of my *portefeuille*, to draw the elastic band carefully around it, safe, but ready when I am again in the humour for indulging in a little "sentimental trash."

"Ten sous on this," said the sergeant of the week, holding a well thumbled letter in his hand; "Timothy Marks," repeated the sergeant, reading the name of the soldier to whom it was addressed.

"That's me," said Timothy Marks; "but where am I to get ten sous? Is it to save it on a sou a day I am? Sure a month's pay wouldn't pay toll for a ramrod."

"Marks," said Lieutenant Cotter, "I'll have to put you under arrest if you use such language."

"I can't help it, sir," seriously replied Timothy Marks. "I haven't broken fast to-day, except with a mouthful of bad coffee and a hard biscuit, my feet are almost to the ground, and you see my uniform in rags; and then to want ten sous for my letter! I can't help it, sir! I can't help it!"

I was glad to see Lieutenant Cotter tolerate the poor fellow's plea, and I was, also, pleased to see Timothy Marks receive his letter, and ravenously devour its contents.

"*Sac-a-dos!*" "*Sac-a-dos!*" rang out the regimental bugle; "*Sac-a-dos!*" shouted the *sous-officier*. "*Sac-a-*

dos!" echoed throughout the line. The usual hurry followed; the *alignement* was taken up, the command "*en route*" given, and away we shuffled, somewhere, anywhere, but out of St. Eustace. The people of the village appeared to take neither interest in, nor notice of, our departure, but just as we were passing the skirt of the village I saw Lieutenant M'Alevey waiting for the company, a handsome geranium stuck in the button-hole of his tunic, and he just in the act of waving a salute to a rather pretty girl, who smiled at him from an adjoining window.

"Flirting again, M'Alevey?" said I, as he smilingly walked beside me, his usually neatly curled moustachios a little out of order.

"Oh, no, captain! only preaching patriotism to that lady you saw in the window—a sweet girl, with all the passionate idealism of St. Teresa."

"Whew!" whistled a newcomer behind us. "M'Alevey, you'll die a monk or a teetotaler as sure as fate, if you pull through this campaign."

"You are quite wrong, Doctor," coolly replied M'Alevey, addressing Dr. Macken, who had just joined us on the march, "I'm too ardent a spirit to be either."

M'Alevey was the soul of humour. I had often to beg of him to leave me, for his companionship meant a round of laughter, which became painful from its constancy. Sunshine or shower, feast or famine, M'Alevey was always the same jovial, joyous fun-maker; occasionally flirting, but ever the essence of wit, good humor, and joviality. His jokes generally went the round of the regiment, and M'Alevey had

become noted for saying the best things of the day. In appearance he was every inch a soldier, his tall well-knit figure was set off by the medal he wore for the Mexican Expedition. If there was an evidence of vanity at all, perhaps it was in the twist of his moustachios, which he as carefully trimmed in the field as in quarters. To lighten a march or cheer away *ennui*, M'Alevey was the best hand I ever met, and, in consequence, his companionship was courted by every officer in the regiment. He was, however, too much the cavalier. A pretty face was irresistible to M'Alevey. If he had lived in the time of Charles I., the days of "personal allegiance," abundance of sack, and unlimited license to woo and win the daughters of the Roundheads, M'Alevey would have been a paragon of perfection. His wit, his jovial humour, and his innocent amours, would have made him beloved of all the beloved. But the march from St. Eustace to Mehun on the thirteenth of December, 1870, went on. Past trampled gardens, deserted homes, and occasionally the *debris* of war material on the road. Sometimes a wearied soldier would fall out and throw himself exhausted upon the snow or mud that lined the *route*. Sometimes a horse, worn with exhaustion, would be unyoked from the baggage-train, and shot upon the side of the road, and as we looked behind perhaps some famished dogs might be seen prowling around its still warm carcass. Occasionally the "*Sac-a-terre*" would sound, and then the troops were, as usual, busy bandaging ugly sores, searching for a mouthful of water, or catching a moment's repose.

Just before the sun was about to leave us, we pulled

up beside an inviting looking field, where the warmth of the deep soil had caused the snow to melt from off its surface. The "*Sac-a-terre*" had sounded fully quarter of an hour, and a few adventurous spirits were busy making coffee. They had set themselves industriously to work the moment they arrived. Two or three had gone for wood, some for water, and others were busy lighting the fire. All went merry as a marriage bell, the water was just boiling, the soldier who undertook the part of cook had poured the coffee upon the bubbling liquid, when "*Sac-a-dos*," "*Sac-a-dos*," shrieked the bugle. "*Sac-a-dos*," shouted the *sous-officiers*. Consternation followed amongst the anxious men who surrounded the kettle full of boiling water. Timothy Marks made use of some sentence which invoked the character of the prince of Pandemonium, while all the time he looked as ferocious as an irritated bull-dog.

"Fall in!" shouted Sergeant Carey.

Around the fire, where all was harmony a moment before, all was turmoil now. Some were for carrying the coffee, others were for spilling it on the ground; a high word or two passed.

"Fall in!" again sternly spoke the sergeant, in language that showed he was not to be tampered with; away we rattled, and the disputed coffee was consumed—I know not how.

I thought I heard Timothy Marks's voice once or twice a little too high, and then I thought I heard the corporal of his squad say a word that silenced him for the while.

"This is the kind of work that makes one think of

the comforts of home, captain," said M'Alevey, coming up and walking beside me, and speaking more seriously than I had heard him for some time.

"M'Alevey," said I, a little surprised at the tone of his conversation, "are you becoming touched with home-sickness?"

"I don't know that," repeated the lieutenant, "but I was thinking of a family party seated around the family table, the ancestral Bible being read by the eldest-born, and the old man occasionally enlivening the scene by rocking on the cat's tail."

I saw M'Alevey was in one of his humours, and I was right, for he rattled away, passing the weary hours of the march in jest and repartee. It was now quite dark, and as we entered a road that led through a deep-set forest, the shade of overhanging trees rendered it difficult to see a yard beyond one's face. Now and again a murmur or a groan came from something that looked like a human being, beside the route, as we passed along; some poor wretch had thrown himself down in his misery, perhaps to die. The groans increased along the way, and, turning round, I found that two of my own men had disappeared. The pace was beginning to tell! The march was forced, and why, nobody knew. There was no enemy in our immediate front, there was none near our rear, and yet we marched as if the fate of our armies depended upon our movements. It is all very well for officers who are mounted, or officers who are not mounted; it is all very well for officers who are well shod, well fed, and have nothing to carry, to command the pace; but it is a different thing with famine and fever-struck

soldiers; it is a different thing when the feet are blistered, and the friction of broken shoes and pebbles causes large blotches to eat into the soldier's feet; it is quite a different thing for the men whose knapsacks are full, and whose haversacks are empty, and who are weighted down with ninety rounds of ammunition. I know well Marshal Saxe was right when he said, "It is legs and not arms that win campaigns," but they must be used at the proper time, and in the proper place. But onward still, out of the forest, ankle-deep in mud, through quiet villages where the dim light of tallow candles placed at the little windows, makes us feel that we are in the land of our kind still. The limbs grow weary, the headache, and the sick drop to the rear, but the spirit is still the same. The men bore their first day's march with wondrous good will. Occasionally, indeed, a snarl from Timothy Marks broke the monotony, and gave forebodings of coming events with more than prophetic truthfulness. But the lurid glare in our front told us we were approaching our destination. The shattered wing of the army of the Loire was encamped around Mehun. Pressing on, we reached the town about 9 p.m., and marched through its narrow thoroughfares to find the place of encampment beyond. How strange the feeling of being in a town once more. How the lights glare!

"Look at them fine rolls of fresh bread in the window!" I heard a soldier say, as we passed a confectioner's shop, the steam rising through the grated cellar as incense rises from a Pagan altar to the gods.

"Yes, and you may look at them, an' that's all you

may have for it," said our old friend Timothy Marks, looking with fretful indifference towards the indicated spot.

"You're always looking at the black side of the moon, Tim," said a good-natured young Dublin man—O'Brien. "How do you know but we shall have those rolls for supper to-night, nicely buttered, and crisped before a gorgeous fire."

"Begone, you omadhaun," said Timothy Marks, casting a look of scorn upon his inexperienced companion. "Yes, indeed, it's butter you want on rolls; bad luck to them, the only roll you'll get for supper 'll be a roll in the mud."

And, indeed, so it was. The mud, or clay, adhered in huge flakes, as large as snow shoes, to our boots, and rendered walking "no small joke," as I heard somebody beside me say. The sergeant-major was, however, equal to all emergencies, and was one of the first to give a silvery lining to the darkened prospect.

"Come, Tim, my man, there is no help for it; you must only make the best of a bad bargain," said Sergeant Carey, going up to Timothy Marks, who was surveying what he called the "cut of his gib" with the air of a man who was not quite satisfied with his measurement.

"No, I suppose not, sergeant," said Timothy Marks, shaking his head; "there's nothin' for it! nothin' for it! There is a big town within half a mile of us, the Prussians will be sleepin' in it before a week, an' their own soldiers are left to waddle in the dirt, like eels in a mud-hole; an' then they expect men to march and to fight for them; the omadhauns."

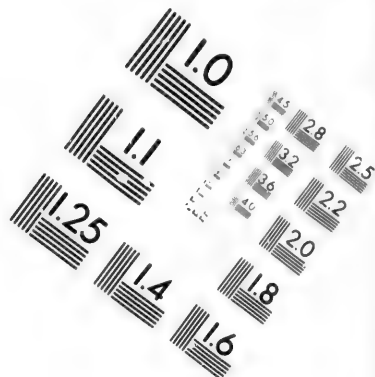
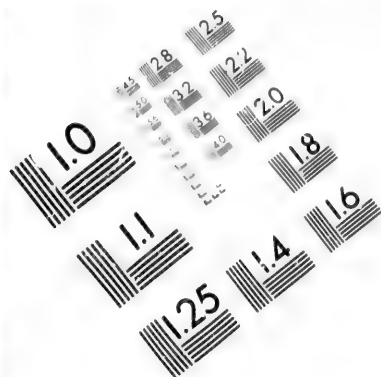
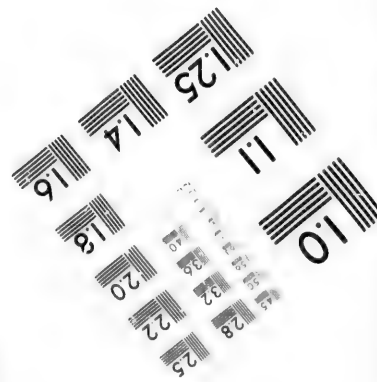
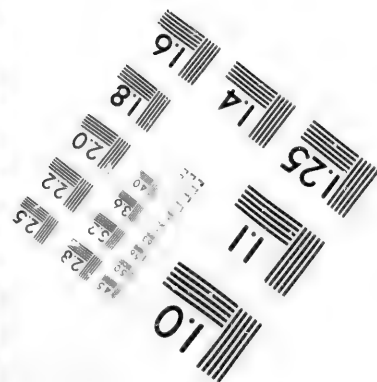
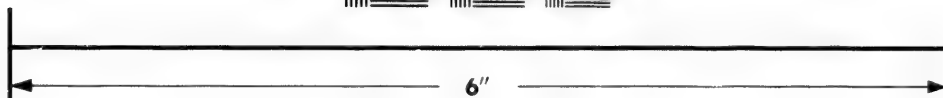
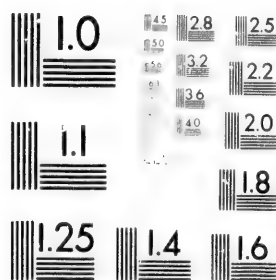
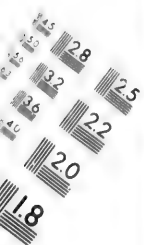


IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)



**Photographic
Sciences
Corporation**

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503



At first I feared that the remarks of Timothy Marks might create dissatisfaction amongst the men, but I soon discovered that they regarded him as a good-natured grumbler, and then I let him have his say. Old soldiers are always hard to please, and Timothy Marks was no exception to the rule. As for the rest, there was not a word of complaint; the sergeants made the best selections they could of places, consistent with the *alignement* of the company, and the men went to work, pitching tents, gathering wood, or, carrying water, while the guard for the *faisceaux* was being told off for the night. The scanty rations of the soldiers had been consumed in the morning, and were it not for a little help from the companies' purse—the *ordinaire*—the soldiers of the Irish company would have been foodless. Just as everything was in order, M'Alevey came and took me by the arm, and gave the comforting news that the officers might sleep in Mehun.

Just then a rifle shot rang out sharp, clear, and shrill upon the frozen atmosphere.

"That's from your company," I said to Captain Ceresole, who was just passing me at the time.

"I suppose some poor devil has been putting an end to himself. It has happened several times before, and all because of *la misere*," said the captain, giving the least shrug to his shoulders, and moving towards the scene of the disaster. Dr. Macken, who happened to be passing at the time, came with us, and there, sure enough, was a soldier lying in such a manner as to convince us that it was a case of suicide. The doctor pronounced life to be extinct, the ball from the

Chassepot having passed through the brain, and slightly wounded a man who was engaged as the *cuisinier* for his guard, a hundred yards away.

"Captain," said Lieutenant Cotter, who was attracted to the spot by the discharge, "isn't that the man we saw bandaging his feet at St. Eustace? see how the shoe is tied, and I think I recognize the features, too."

"I believe you're right, Cotter; it is the same. Was he one of your men, Ceresole?" I asked.

"Yes, poor fellow, he was," replied Captain Ceresole, "and I regret this very much. *Mon Dieu*, what will his mother do? Here, sergeant, search his pockets. Give me those papers; thanks! Throw his blanket over his face, place a guard upon the body, and tell the sergeant-major to report it to the adjutant." And the captain walked away, opening a letter directed to himself by the "foot-sore Frenchman."

"Capitaine," began the letter, "you know me, Henri ———; when you get this I will be dead. You know I have tried to do my duty, looking for my only reward in your recognition of my willingness to obey. For your kindness to me I give you my dying thanks; you have been a generous commander and a kind superior. When you could, consistent with your duty, you gave me all the indulgence in your power. But, capitaine, I am afraid of life. I cannot live any longer in the agony I am now suffering. You may think I am not worse than other men; perhaps I am not, but I must be of weaker mind, or physique, for I would rather die than live in torture. You will find that the bone protrudes through the flesh on my toes, eaten off with frost, and the doctor has refused to allow me to go to hospital. I cannot march, and it is better to die. I have, however, one

request to ask of you. My poor mother nursed you when you were a boy—tell her I fell in action; if I thought you would not do this, I would die unhappy; but I am sure you will, so I will die easily. Good-by, capitaine. Adieu. “HENRI ———.”

“Poor Henri,” said Ceresole, with a touch, of real feeling perceptible in his tones. It was all I heard but it was enough, and I left Ceresole, as I knew he wished to be, alone.

A parting instruction to Serg. Carey, then M'Alevey, Cotter, the doctor, and myself waded through streams of water, dodged through baggage-waggons and gun-carriages, and at last entered the boundary of one of the dirtiest places in which it has ever been my lot to pass through. Mehun, oh! may I never look upon your like again! M'Alevey was a capital hand at scouting out lodgings. He knew exactly by the conduct of the people who answered his query, “Have you room for four officers,” whether he would persevere or not. If it was a lady who showed the slightest evidence of good temper, M'Alevey would interest her with his conversation, make her laugh with his witticism, and the chances were ten to one that he would succeed in finding a bed where dozens had failed before.

“There's no use going there, M'Alevey, the *Commandant* has just been trying,” said I, as M'Alevey left my side and walked over towards a little house that stood in from the road. There was a peculiar twinkle in M'Alevey's eye, he gave the least curl to his moustache, and knocked at the door. From the moment the door opened and a handsome dark-haired girl stood in the passage, I made certain that

M'Alevey would succeed, and succeed he did. I could see the stern look she assumed for the moment relax, then a smile traced an expression upon her features, and before many seconds I saw the lieutenant raise his *kepi* as his fair *vis-a-vis* ran off to ask her father if he could make any kind of a shake-down? With the young lady's father M'Alevey was equally successful; and a few rugs placed upon the boards, beside a gorgeous fire, made us comfortable for the night.

Our host treated us with marked kindness when he heard we were Irish Volunteers. He was singularly intelligent for his class, and understood that Ireland was washed by the Atlantic. To men who went to France full of sympathy for her misfortunes, and who had thrown their lives into the contest—we who conjured up the history of the past—the stories of the Old Brigade—of Clare at Ramillies—of that heroic dash on the slopes above Fontenoy—of the stand at Cremona, or of the efforts of our fathers at Ypres, where the ramparts yielded to the charge of the Irish Volunteers and covered them with glory—to us who remembered all these, who treasured them as gems in the history of our people—and who expected similar recollection of them by the French—it was often mortifying to hear some mawkish Frenchman ask—“*Ireland! Ireland! Where is Ireland?*”

But our host was an intelligent man in his way. He had a vague idea that Ireland was somewhere on the west coast of England, and made an amusing effort to trace its geographical position with the point of M'Alevey's walking-cane. He appeared to think that Ireland was, geographically, a hump

upon the shoulders of Great Britain, and the poor man looked amazingly satisfied as M'Alevey acquiesced, or at least hesitated to contradict his charming innocence. But my mischievous lieutenant had his eyes in other quarters. M'Alevey could not be quiet in the presence of a woman—be she lady or simple maid—without paying her courteous attention. He made us all laugh “rings round,” and the little clock beside the bed marked 1 A.M. before the old man, or perhaps the old man's daughter, could be induced to say “good night.”

Our toilets were a little troublesome that night—that is, we took off our great coats and long boots, and, wrapped in our blankets, for a short time we watched the flames lick up the logs of wood that were abundantly heaped upon the hearth, the heat from which sent the flush of comfort through our veins; while fatigue, that best of narcotics, soon made us fall fast asleep.

CHAPTER VII.

By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed;
By humble hands thy humble grave adorned,
By strangers honoured and by strangers mourned.

The sun was about peeping over the south-eastern horizon, or, in the words of M'Alevey, had "struck a light," the following morning, when a vigorous shake by somebody caused me to awake. Looking around I saw M'Alevey engaged in an interesting conversation with our host's daughter, while I heard him advocating the relative becomingness of short dresses and high-heeled boots. Andy, my orderly, had, by some peculiar power of his own, a power he was fond of calling the "instinct of rason," ferreted out my whereabouts, and he appeared to be seriously engaged at bayonet exercise with somebody who had sought refuge in the flue, but, as he readily explained, he was only removing something that stopped the free passage of the smoke through the chimney. Lieutenant Cotter was still quiet, but his nasal thunder grated harshly upon the delicate utterances of M'Alevey, who appeared to be now using such language to his *vis-a-vis*, as Pope might put into the mouth of Abelard when addressing Héloïse. To Lieutenant M'Alevey I was often as obnoxious as a fat man is to the occupants of an omnibus, or as a tall man is in a crowd on a procession day, and I fear the recording

angel had no prayer to register for his orderly, who had so unceremoniously awaked me from my slumbers.

Crash! crash! down came the sheet of iron with which Andy had too successfully played, and carried along with it a cloud of soot, which enveloped the poor fellow from head to foot, causing him to spit and splutter like a monkey after a dose of snuff. Andy gave a spring to the rear that an athlete might envy, and upset a *marmite*, which was filled with water, over the beardless face of the sleeping *sous-lieutenant*. M'Alevey sprang into the hall, kicking up his heels like a well-trained circus-horse, while the half-drowned Cotter was calling for the assistance of the half-choked Andy. M'Alevey kept crowing away in the hall just by way of illustrating that he, at least, was "out of the wood," while I succeeded in covering my head with my blanket to ward off the soot, and rolled away from the pools of water that were forming around me. The situation was however, quickly understood, and as Andy was engaged in removing the soot from his person, M'Alevey put his head in at the door, and congratulated him upon his successful attempt at a reveille. Just then the proprietor of the house appeared upon the scene and invited us to another room, where we were safe. The room was neatly furnished, the breakfast was choice and ample, and M'Alevey and the daughter of our hostess were wickedly flirting across the table. It was hard to make him serious when a pretty face was attracting his attention, but our host was himself an old soldier and had closed a record of fifteen years in Mexico, where

he was badly wounded. In spite of himself M'Alevey was drawn into the meshes of a conversation with our host, but for a time it was of a halting gait, and the efforts the lieutenant made to turn the conversation towards the pretty girl before him were as awkward as they were amusing. But it was no use! The medal he wore for the Mexican campaign was too great a temptation for the old man and we outsiders soon found ourselves listening to a hurried medley of names in which Pueblo, Vera Cruz, Aztecs and Maximilian were liberally interspersed. They were fighting their battles over again. M'Alevey first and then the other told some exciting event of the luxurious land.

"Ah" said our host, between sips of his *vin ordinaire*, "ah, my campaign in Mexico was for me the most successful of all the campaigns I went through, for there I received my *medal militaire*," and he proudly touched the ribbon which is, next to the *Légion d'honneur*, the most prized decoration in France.

"Did you ever hear of Docir?" asked M'Alevey of our host.

"Oh, the traitor, yes, of course. What an odd story the events of his treachery is; do you remember them?" he in turn enquired.

"Well, yes," said M'Alevey, "I knew the fellow well. He was one of the best companions I ever met, but a consummate villain for all that."

"Tell us what he did M'Alevey" I said.

"Well it is not a long story, Captain, but it is true. Our friend here knows that it is no 'old soldier's yarn,' but a solid fact. I'll tell you," he said, fixing himself

cozily in his chair and appearing to forget the pretty eyes that were admiringly watching him, "but will you allow me mademoiselle," he said holding a cigar in his fingers.

"Oh certainly," both father and daughter replied.

"I smoke a good deal," said the old man, and immediately accepted a cigar from M'Alevey, who appeared to settle to the story of "Docir."

"At the time we landed in Vera Cruz I was a corporal in the very regiment to which we are now attached, the *Regiment Etranger*. I was one day passing along the streets wondering at the singular appearance of everything I saw. A lovely harbour, the castle of St. Jean d'Ulloa in the offing, the houses built of coral ray, the flat roofs with water tanks on top and the heat, all made me curious and as lazy as I could be consistent with my duty. I had two men with me doing some fatigue work, and upon turning one of the corners of a street I met an old companion named Docir. He was dressed in civilian's costume, but I recognised him at once and arrested him as a deserter.

"'For what?' he asked in astonishment when I arrested him.

"'For desertion,' I replied, 'come Docir, you know me well. My name is M'Alevey of the *Regiment Etranger*, and your name is Louis Docir who deserted from the regiment.

"'You are wrong' Docir said to me, 'I bought my discharge before I left Algeria, and you are taking unnecessary trouble,' he confidently answered.

"But it was no use. I saw an uneasiness in his

action when he found that I was determined to bring him into quarters, and my suspicions were confirmed when I noticed that he was armed. A mystery surrounded this man. He impressed me with a feeling of my own littleness. I felt that I had a superior and bolder mind before me, although I hope it was a worse one as well. Before the Adjutant, Docir was proved to be a deserter, and as we were *en route* his trial was postponed until the following day. That night we started for Pueblo and Docir escaped. He was guarded with all customary precautions, but yet he disappeared, a deserter for the second time. Time went on. We had been engaged at Pueblo and had lost a number of men. At last the place fell and our regiment went to the siege of Oaxaca. One day, to the astonishment of everybody, Docir rode boldly into the camp mounted on a fine white charger. He rode straight to the Colonel's quarters, in order as he said, to account for his disappearance from the regiment. The Colonel received him with cool suspicion. Docir appeared to be penitent and told a story full of remorse.

" 'Mon Colonel,' said the deserter, ' I was so fatigued by the forced marches from Chichihuit to Camerore that I could not keep up with my company. The heat was intense, we could get no water to drink, it was worse than Algeria, and I fell to the rear. Regiment after regiment passed me on the way and I was still unable to stir and I thought that my name was called to "fall in" not on earth but for all eternity. I would have marched mon Colonel if I could, but my limbs refused to obey my will and I lay unconscious of all that passed for many hours. When I awoke I

was in the hands of guerillas, and had it not been for the kindness of Don Gonzalve and his family, I should have died. But, *mon Colonel*' he continued in almost bashful tones, 'Don Gonzalve had a daughter. It was she who superintended the nurse who cared for me in my sickness and with her own hand often bathed my fevered temples in delicious waters perfumed for my special use.'

"'Oh,' the Colonel half smilingly replied, 'I guess the rest. You were reported the handsomest soldier in your battalion, gay and dashing and—'

"'And you know the sequel, *mon Colonel*,' said Docir, respectfully bowing before the chief. 'I shall not harass you with details which would only be fit for lovers ears, but *mon Colonel*, a simple soldier would have no hope of obtaining the sanction of Don Gonzalve, and so we determined to clope. Let us pass over that event, and you find me on the road to Vera Cruz with *Señorita Gonzalve*, prepared to fly with her to Europe. But fate was against us. We were overtaken on the way; the *Señorita* was brave and resolute. The chase was long and a running fire was kept up at me during the time. The *Señorita* would not leave my side, she persisted in staying near me. We urged our horses faster, when at last a bullet struck the *Señorita Gonzalve* in the back and killed her on the spot. Not till then *mon Colonel*,' said Docir looking proudly around, 'not till then did I remember that I was a French soldier and these wounds,' said he, baring his breast and arms which were well scarred, 'these are the proof of what followed, and the testimony of the truth of the simple story I tell you. After that

bloody affray I made my way to Vera Cruz and was there arrested as a deserter. Well mon Colonel, I confess that I fled from the guard on the way from Pueblo. I knew that a dishonourable death awaited me if I did not escape. But it was not that I feared death, for I am here now to court it; but I wanted to die honourably, and I escaped in order that before my light was extinguished I might do something to prove that I was not unworthy of wearing the uniform I did. In order to prove this, I risked my life by entering the town of Oaxaca, and here, mon Colonel, is a map of the fortifications and mines of the place,' and he drew from his pocket a beautiful map, drawn by himself.

"The Colonel placed Docir under arrest, reported the matter to General Douay, the same who fell at Wissembourg, and he pardoned Docir."

"Yes, I remember," said our host, "but what a ruffian he tu—, but go on Lieutenant," he said, checking himself in his denunciation, "go on, I'll only spoil the story if I interfere."

"Well," said M'Alevey, "Docir was set to work with the engineers. The officers frequently consulted him; all had confidence in his honesty, and the siege was pushed on briskly; the day of assault was fixed, and the town was to be attacked at the points indicated by Docir.

"At last the morning fixed for the assault arrived. Our regiment was to lead the attack. I remember we all paraded about 3 A. M., rolls were called, and men spoke with bated breath. The troops were all ready, and the desperate anxiety which men

experience before a battle, took possession of us all. Every moment we expected to hear the bugles sound the advance. Each one felt that once more every minute might be his last. It would be better to move, we all thought, than to stand there. Then officers rode quickly about, double sentries were posted all around, there was something wrong, and yet we knew not what. All orders were countermanded—Docir was missing again. Here was a mystery. The plots and plans of the first fortnight were come to naught. Everything was changed; the manner of attack was entirely altered. This took some time, and before our plans were completed, the town quietly surrendered. Docir was captured, and this time made no attempt to disguise his villainy. He was as stubborn as a mule. Had Oaxaca been attacked at the points indicated by the ruffian, we would all have been blown into the air. The ground was mined, and Docir, we found, was the concocter of the treacherous deed. He was a Colonel in the Mexican Army, and the story he told about Gonzalve was untrue, for we found that his wounds were received fighting against us at Ocatalane."

"But that is not all," said our host to M'Alevey, as he appeared to have finished.

"No, no," said M'Alevey, looking slightly confused, for in truth he had had a word or two with the host's daughter, and was commencing to wander; "no, no, that is not all; Docir was sent to Pueblo, and it looks so like romance, that I fear you, Captain," he said looking at me, "may doubt it, but I assure you it is true, he escaped again."

"Yes," said our host, "and escaped when he was chained too."

"Yes, when he was chained," re-echoed M'Alevey.

"It certainly does look odd," I said.

"Well, I assure you it is true. Then a reward of 500 piastres was offered for his recapture, and he was caught by some of the free shooters belonging to the famous Colonel Dupau. He was then tried, found guilty, and sentenced to be shot. The prison in which he was kept was an old convent behind the Cathedral. While awaiting execution, Pueblo was visited by a terrible earthquake which knocked down the side wall of the prison in which he was kept, and he was once more free. He was again recaptured, but not before the end of a week. This time he was guarded so that escape was impossible. At last the day fixed for his execution arrived, he walked from the prison in the middle of the troops, smoking a cigar; the distance was half a mile. We had to pass through the principal streets of the city, and I saw him several times kiss his hand and raise his *kepi* to the ladies in their balconies. When we arrived at the Place St. José, the place of execution, he asked to be shot standing, not to have his eyes bandaged, nor his hands tied. All these requests were refused. Major Rolland, brother to the General who now commands at Besançon, read the sentence, and tears of generous regret ran down his face as he finished the fatal document. The troops formed three sides of a square, Docir took his place in front of the firing party. A volley—and his soul had gone before his God."

"The Major might have reserved his tears" said our host when M'Alevey had finished.

"Well," replied the Lieutenant, "Docir was in many respects a superior man. He had been an officer in the Austrian army, but had to resign because he killed another officer in a duel. He was brilliantly educated, and possessed many of the qualities which are calculated to elevate a man far above his fellows."

Just then the sergeant of the week came with some instructions, and after a few words of hurried farewell we bade good-bye to our host, a lingering look from M'Alevey towards his pretty daughter, and then we were off to camp.

On our way we were joined by Captain Ceresole. He was an old soldier—had seen service in the Crimea, Italy, Africa and Mexico. He could not believe that France was beaten, but he did believe that France was sold. Of this he was fond of expressing a decided opinion.

En route we were joined by Captain Mason and some officers of the regiment, with whom we got into conversation about military events in general. At that moment some Spahis cantered by, their white burnouses flowing gracefully over the quarters of their Arab steeds. They looked as if they had copied their ideas of a uniform from a chapter in the Bible. Mason gave us a long description of their habits when in their native wilds. Their nomadic life, their hospitality, and their social customs. The few of them I met with were singularly reserved, and all possessed that self control which is characteristic of their race. Mason was loud in their praises, and

lauded their devotion to France with soldierly fervour.

When Mason had disposed of the Spahis, he went into eulogiums. "You know Fouché sent the Duke of Wellington, Napoleon's plan of Waterloo," he added, with a glance which I interpreted to mean as being a period to his argument.

"The French will never forget that affair," said McAlevey, rolling up a cigarette, and lighting a match on the roughed side of a tin box. "But, apart from that, everything in the army appears 'topsy-turvy,' as we say in Ireland. You have no statistics of any experience, indeed your entire staff appears, like everything else, to be improvised for the occasion. Your artillery is badly served; your cavalry do not know how to ride, and appear only to hold on their horses because it is 'regulation' to do so."

"That is not the worst," said Ceresole, pointing to some famished soldiers who were sitting near us; "to be foodless and shoeless, and crushed down with abominably heavy knapsacks; our commissariat broken up; the *morale* of the troops destroyed by continual defeat, and then treachery with all, that is what beats us and gives us the finishing stroke. But what's this?" he added, looking along our line of route to a cluster of men coming towards us. "I declare they are prisoners, and Uhlans, too."

Immediately after we saw twenty or thirty dismounted Uhlans, escorted by some *Franc-tireurs*, coming towards us. The Uhlans walked with the stride of well-trained men. They carried themselves as proudly as if they expected to be the recipients of an oration, or to hear the stirring words of "Wacht

am Rhein" greeting their cars. There was a *hauteur* about their bearing that was almost defiant in its dash. They were, too, men of much muscular development, and kept the step and their dressing in singular contrast to their escort. Their outfit was warm and serviceable, and there was neither the trace of want of food nor depression in their countenances. They were, in every respect, good-looking soldiers. To the alarmed senses of the French peasantry all German cavalry men were alike—Uhlans. Dragoons and Hussars, they did not count, all were Uhlans, whose audacity and bearing too often, indeed, caused alarm and terror. The Uhlan proper is an ordinary lancer, taking the title from their Polish originals. They are, too, heavy cavalry, and may be fairly spoken of as big men on big horses. They carry beside their lances, a sword and pistol, and are distinguishable by a lancer-cap called "Chapkey." The German Hussars and Dragoons, however, do similar duty with the Uhlans, and are recognisable by their fur caps and helmets. In the field the armies are surrounded by a perfect web of mounted men, through which no spy can penetrate without great personal danger. Their cavalry, too, penetrate an enemy's country in all directions, miles in advance of the main body, often in twos and fours, and keep up a well connected line of communication with the troops behind. Unlike the French, the German cavalry is not loaded down with dead weight, which, as every rider knows, is what kills the horses. A light schrabraque goes over the horse's back, and a pair of shoes, a comb, a brush, an extra shirt, and a pair of stockings make up the

equipment of the German cavalry men. Nor have they any dismounted men in the German cavalry. Every man is liable for outpost duty or the shock of a charge.

"There is no regiment in the French army those fellows hate or dread so much as they do us," said Captain Ceresole, as he walked by my side, at the same time casting a significant glance at the captured Uhlans.

"Why," I asked, "surely the *Regiment Etranger* is no better than any other regiment in the army; or can it be considered as such?"

"Yes," replied Ceresole, "it is, even by Frenchmen themselves admitted to be one of their crack regiments."

"Not even excepting the Zouaves or Turcos?"

"Not even excepting the Zouaves or Turcos. Prince Frederick Charles, in his 'Art of Fighting in the French Army,' admits that the Foreign Regiment is the most formidable corps in the French service. You see we have all the dare-devils of Europe in our ranks. The highest testimony of our worth is that we are always placed in the post of honour, and you'll see when more fighting is to be done, if we are not placed in front, as we were at Orleans, where we lost 1,000 men in six hours' work. It has given the corps some *éclat*, too, that nearly all the great commanders of the day graduated in our rank; Bazaine, Fleury, Bourbaki, and MacMahon included."

"Yes; but your African experience is not calculated to develop the capacity of generals for command, as much as it is to encourage young troops to stand fire,"

I urged. "In Africa you move in small bodies, your warfare is entirely guerilla in its effects. You require no strategy, and but little tactics to overcome the untrained Arabs.

"Very true," replied Ceresole, "it is a better field for the rank and file, than for officers in command. Campaigning in Africa is, in every essential, different to what it is here. You see in Africa we march in squares, for those wiry Arabs are likely to attack us at any moment. At night the videttes and sentries are continually harrassed by the insurgents. It is a frequent occurrence for an Arab to steal through the short underwood like a veritable snake, and, watching his opportunity, spring on the startled sentry, and, before he can make any alarm, the keen knife of his active assailant has despatched him."

"That should induce caution, and develop that sense of keenness without which videttes and sentries are always liable to fall into snares."

"So it does; and if you saw, *Capitaine*, how quickly the *Régiment Etranger* can turn out in the middle of the night to the cry of *aux armes*, you would see that all their African experience is not quite lost on them. But," he added, somewhat sorrowfully, "we have no *Régiment Etranger* now. Those men of yours," said he, "are now almost the only foreigners in the regiment—Orleans did for the rest."

"But is it true what I hear about your marches in Africa being so harassing?" I asked, desirous of finding out all I could about a country in which our regiment had seen so much service.

"Perfectly," replied Ceresole. "It often happens,

on the march that men fall behind as you see them do here every hour. But their doom is sealed. It is certain death to lag behind in Africa, for the enemy is ever hovering around our flanks ready to murder every man who falls to the rear. You know an Arab never thinks a man dead until he cuts his head off; and more than once I have seen the heads of some of the men of my own company, men who loitered or were compelled to fall behind owing to sickness, cramps, or blistered feet; I have more than once seen their heads before our battalion on our line of march. The Arabs had decapitated the soldiers, then ridden past us, and deposited the heads on our route, a grim warning to the foot-sore and sickly."

"Lagsters must be rare under such circumstances?"

"Not so rare as you would fancy, *mon Capitaine*," replied Ceresole. "I remember once in the province of Oran my own orderly took sick on the line of march. The nearest station was ninety kilometres in our front, and the poor soldier struggled on until he became exhausted. I allowed him to abandon his pack, keeping his rifle and ammunition alone. The release enabled the sickly man to struggle on ten or fifteen kilometres more, and then his coat was thrown away, and I myself carried his rifle and ammunition. Behind us clouds of sand-dust dotted the horizon, and away upon our flanks Arab horsemen were stealthily watching our movements. To fall to the rear was certain death, and I can never forget the resigned countenance of the young man as he found himself sinking as it were into a living tomb. He grew weaker and weaker; the eyes protruded, the

tongue swelled, the head grew giddy ; his companions supported him as long as they could, but his hour had come, his sands had run ; he became a dead load, and had to be left upon the Sahara, the sun's rays piercing to his brain, and the savage natives waiting to pounce upon his half-dead body. The battalion was halted for a moment, to allow of a parting word with his companions, and then he was left to his fate, a shriek of despair being the last we heard of him as he found himself utterly alone. Once, indeed, I looked behind, and saw him leaning upon his hand, as he appeared to be gazing around the open desert, while his countenance wore an expression akin to madness. I waved a handkerchief as a parting salutation, and then I saw the abandoned soldier raise his *kepi* from his head, throw it in the air, and sink exhausted upon the sand. In four hours afterwards his head was before us on the road, the face horribly contorted, with the blood clotted around the thorax in hard sun-dried patches. However," said Ceresole, with a significant shrug of the shoulders, "it's all a soldier's luck—

Mais à la guerre,
Comme à la guerre."

And he walked away to join his company.

CHAPTER VIII.

Day was lapsing into night ; it was *coucher du soleil*. The sky was as varied in its hue as the most varied of mother-of-pearl shell. Gold, green, and silver appeared to be blended in the beautiful array of clouds that dolphin-like changed their hue in dying. It was such an evening as Scott pictures in his "Rokeby," when he makes sunset in the tropics a sight the angels might envy. There was something impressive in the stillness of the hour. Beholding a sunrise or sunset, man must, indeed, feel the greatness of nature and the meanness of art. What are the boasted works of Nineveh or of Egypt ; of Greece or of Rome ; of Carthage, or of Athens, or of all the wonderful remains of architectural grandeur—

"Whose very ruins are tremendous,"

compared with one glance at the coming or the parting day. Even in Nature itself, there is nothing so glorious as the effect caused by that orb which obeyed His word when He said—"Let there be light." The Alps are "grand ;" Niagara is "sublime ;" the Rhine and Killarney are "beautiful ;" but sunrise or sunset is alone "magnificent." It is but holding "a glimmering taper to the sun" to make even the semblance of a comparison. Look up, and draw upon your fancy ; see those fleecy castles in the air, changing in character and formation before the attacks of those beleaguered clouds which dash in firm resolve against the buttresses of the structure. Cannot your fancy

see the combat between the hostile masses deepen, and the clouds around tinged with the blood of the dying day! It is daylight battling with darkness. The rainbow's hues form but a fractional portion of the many-coloured dyes which, for a fleeting moment, stamp their impress upon the shaded splendour of the clouds, and yet all these colours harmonise so beautifully that Art becomes but a poor copyist of glorious Nature. But night triumphed! The moon heralded the victory of Erebus, and the sun sank below the horizon, bathed in a sea of glory, and the last ray of daylight, with sickly glare, followed in its wake, faithful to the end. Then the moon "sole arbitress of the night," shone forth in all its borrowed splendour. Along the tops of the deep-set brush in our immediate front the moonbeams played in fancied gambols, while the entire plain around was bathed in a flood of genial brightness. The numberless little *tentes d'abri* covered hill and dale, while the occasional challenge of a sentinel sounded clear and sharp upon the now still atmosphere. The star-spangled heavens added lustre to the brilliant canopy above, and a path of light traverses the surface of a small lake close by, and seems to penetrate into its dark, unfathomed caves. The firmament overhead is familiar to the gaze, and impresses a feeling of boundless immensity on the mind. Nearly all these familiar stars above are visible in Holy Ireland; and looking up, I bethought me of that passage in the Old Testament, which asks: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" Pitiable, indeed, is that poor pensioner on the bounties of an

hour, whose heart is callous to the calls of faith, or who cannot think with Young, that "by night an atheist half believes a God." To a soldier, too, this feeling is keenly perceptible. When active life stands still, and the wearied troops sink upon their slimy bed, and make a pause in their career—a pause which may be prophetic of their end; when "Night from her ebony throne, in rayless majesty stretches forth her leaden sceptre o'er the slumbering world," there is a depth of thought, an ocean of faith before the sentinel as he gazes in respectful awe at the majesty of Nature. Look at the order of that vaulted dome, hung with crape for the departed day; look from out of the narrow heart of man's experience; take one broad, great view of Nature as it is; look away from the pretentious littleness of humanity, into the mysterious ocean of space, and say if you can "there is no God;" or will you not rather think with Burns that "an atheist laugh is a poor exchange for a Diety offended." But let us descend to mother earth again, and see how fares the men of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*.

The fires were growing dull, and already some weary soldiers sought the shelter of their miserable coverings, where they were expected to rest and be thankful. The clayey soil had been, for miles round, torn up by passing troops as they converged in all directions upon the principal route, beside which we had encamped. The army had departed again, and there were but a few thousand troops behind—perhaps ten thousand in all—awaiting orders for the morrow.

As I passed along the line where the Irish company was encamped, the moon's rays were sufficiently bril-

liant to enable me to see the industrious, patching torn garments, or artistically sewing the soles of their shoes to the decaying uppers with pieces of whip-cord; others were stretched upon the muddy earth with nothing but their miserable blankets around them.

"One of the men wishes to see you, sir," said one of the sergeants at my side.

The poor fellow who desired to see me was barefooted, and his feet were blueish-red, while he limped over to us, the very picture of misery. He spoke in words of manly bearing, hesitating to blame, willing to endure all that mortal man could, but yet declaring his inability to march unless he could be provided with shoes. Just then, *mon Colonel* was passing, his little grey Arab sticking fetlock deep in the clayey soil, and I brought the barefooted Irishman over and pointed out his lamentable condition. He was a kind old soul too. He visibly shivered when he saw the pitiable state of the young man, and, while professing his regret, asked what could he do? There were no shoes in store, there were none at Mehun—not a pair! Thousands of men were not much better, but if he could hold out for the next march, perhaps at St. Florent we might find something that would at least keep his feet from the ground. It was poor encouragement to the perishing young man, for whom, however, we succeeded in buying a pair of shoes at a price which would certainly suggest the practical illustration of there being "nothing like leather."

Night had now fairly set in, and the few officers in camp returned to Mehun—we to our old quarters, which our host of the previous evening had

reserved for our special accommodation. Cotter had to find shelter in what his senior lieutenant called a "joint proprietors' establishment"—i.e., a butcher's shop. But it was the same old story with M'Alevey, cracking jokes, telling rich stories of his African and Mexican experience, and making laughter a fatigue rather than a recreation. Of Marshal MacMahon he had much to say. The now celebrated Marshal was, for an African officer, a rigid disciplinarian. One time on parade he had occasion to reprimand a captain, whose temper got the better of his judgment, and he snapped his revolver at MacMahon's head. The pistol fortunately missed fire, the captain was immediately arrested, and the colonel turning to the *Commandant*, said, "Give that man fifteen days *salle de police* for having his arms out of order." M'Alevey vowed it was true, and his vows were to me as "proofs of Holy Writ," except, indeed, when he vowed by a woman's eyes, and then he was a darker dissembler than *Tartuffe*. I always thought he considered love and war as twin sisters, and he blended the two elements in very fair proportions. And so night and morning passed, and I fear M'Alevey lingered a little as we said adieu, and perhaps the dark-haired girl regretted the parting as much as he. "Never mind," he said, as we turned our backs upon the house that had given us the shelter of its roof-tree for two nights; "never mind, you know the jolly song, captain—

'Every town we march through,
The girls are looking arch through,'

but I wonder where we shall sleep to-night."

"On grand guard, my boy," I answered, "don't you know we are for duty."

"Delighted to hear it; Mehun, with all your mud, I love you still."

But the *rappel* sounded as usual at noon, and the 5th battalion of the Foreign Regiment was for grand guard. In all, the battalion that should have mustered 1,000 men could only show about 300 rifles. The drums beat, and the rolls swell out upon the keen air, and for the moment at least, make even the wearied soldiers stand erect, and forget their miseries. And then a word of command, another, and yet another, and we floundered over the slimy ground, out upon the road, and then away for the post. Two kilometres are passed over, and then the various *petite-postes* were pointed out, the command handed over, and the old guard relieved, leaving us to occupy the ground. The enemy's cavalry had been seen not far off during the day, and the prospect of a brush had infused a little *esprit* into the men. But the drizzling rain had soaked into their garments, damped their ardour, and left them cowering at their posts. The pitching of tents was forbidden, the lighting of fires would not be allowed, even if it were possible, and rolled up in their blankets, four feet by two, the soldiers shrank behind some low ditches, or lay in batches upon the open field, while the rain fell upon their half numb forms. For my own part I was comfortable. A little hut close by afforded excellent shelter, and the props that supported the vines soon made the place as snug as a nut-shell. The *sergent-fourrier*, M^cCrossin, shared my shelter,

while an orderly attended to a fry for a late meal. But the rain still poured upon the men, and must have thawed the spirit of the best of them. It is not fighting, but the elements, that soldiers fear. The ring of a rifle has no terror in a soldier's ear, but it is the drenching rain, the benumbing frost, and *la misere* that breaks a soldier's spirit, and makes him indifferent to life, almost anxious for death. Edmund Burke said, indeed, that "every day we live will convince thinking men that there are evils to which the calamities of war are blessings." Well, perhaps there are; but they are not physical evils. To give such new miseries to the world would be like cutting the volumes of the Sybil. If Edmund Burke *felt* a campaign he might alter his theory, for practice is the best of teachers. There was not, indeed, more discomfort than men could expect amongst the soldiers of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* up to the present, but the shadow of the future was even more terrible than the sufferings of the present, and, as time proved, became daily more severe. We were but young in our experience that night upon grand guard. But custom is indeed second nature. Even under drenching rain, the soldiers of the Irish company sought forgetfulness in repose. Sleep overcomes all men. Alexander the Great slept on the field of Arbela, and Napoleon, if my memory is not coquettish, upon that of Austerlitz, and every schoolboy knows that Homer, in his "Iliad," elegantly represents sleep as overcoming all men, and even the gods, except Jupiter alone. The Irish soldiers succumbed then to what the gods could not resist, and under the down-pour the men slept, if

not comfortably nor soundly, at least so well that they were unconscious of the outer world. But the sentries here were all alive to the importance of being on the *qui vive*. It was often a matter of considerable trouble to teach some of the soldiers of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* the necessary challenge and counter-challenge in French. Some of the men honestly confessed that it "bothered them entirely." Amongst the latter there was one giant Cork "boy," whose rotundity had been sadly diminished since he became a soldier. He was fond of showing his companions his gradual decay as he would clutch his great-coat in folds, and appealingly say, while he gave an ominous shake of his head, that he was "going, going, going." He had the form and build of a huge man, but he was as simple as a child, could cry for a lost companion, or lose his life for a friend. But Timothy Larkin had, like everybody else, to do his sentry go, although he could not master his *ralliment*. I was told a good story of this man-child. Tim was a *factionnaire* on one of the outposts, to which an unfortunate French peasant too nearly approached. Tim made a vigorous attempt at the "*qui vive*," which in cooler moments he could, no doubt, have remembered, but the excitement of the instant drove everything out of Tim's head but his native brogue.

"*Qui, qui, qui*—who's there?" challenged Tim, bringing his Chassepot promptly to the charge. To this there was no reply, the poor Frenchman standing as still as St. Paul when he was afflicted with the loss of speech.

"*Qui, qui*—what's there?" again demanded the per-

sistent Tim. To the Frenchman the mixed jargon was confounding, and, as he afterwards explained, he thought somehow that he had strayed into the German lines.

"*Qui*, who's there—what's there?" roared the now aroused sentry, at the same time fixing a cartridge in his gun. The peasant heard the "click," as the *garde mobile* of the chassepot was drawn back to open the breech, and, in the descriptive words of Timothy himself, "the Frencher bolted." But he wasn't quick enough for Tim, who was by his side in a second, and almost transfixed him with his bayonet, when the terrified peasant threw himself into a half melted snowdrift, and lay on his back, kicking up his heels, like a fly pierced with a needle. The sentry was in no good humour, for he believed that he had surely caught a German spy, and, while he shouted for the "corporal of the guard," he kept tickling the Frenchman with the point of his bayonet, and swearing that if he attempted to stir "one inch" he would "skiver" him. The peasant roared, the sentinel shouted, the whole post was under arms, when Tim was found by the corporal of a French post close by, who arrested the peasant, and clapped Timothy on the back, telling him that he was "very good *soldat* ; very good *Irlandaise*."

But at midnight the rain passed away, and the wind carried dark masses of clouds across the pale surface of the moon. At regular intervals the lieutenants and *sous-lieutenants* reported to me the incidents of the rounds, and, just as I was about to stretch upon the damp hearth of the hut, a messenger arrived

in haste from the camp, with orders to return at once. In with *petite-postes*; there is surely something in the wind now! Back to Mehun, where the troops were all awake and under arms, while along the road leading in the direction of Bourges a stream of soldiers was passing. Our own regiment was filing into the road as we arrived.

"Did you see that, Captain," said Dr. Macken, looking away to the north-east; "it was like the flash of a gun. There it is again," he added, as something like a flash appeared through the gloom.

"It is only the aurora," I replied.

"Going into action," said one of the captains—Laberge—as his company filed past, "We shall see what your Irish boys will do now."

"All right," I replied; "we'll be with the crowd somewhere."

In the meantime, we had some sick, and it was arranged that they should stop behind and go to hospital at Mehun. One poor fellow named Eustace was very bad with small-pox, and had to rough it upon the earth, the fever eating into his veins with deadly effect. In all, there were five or six knocked up by the trials they had already gone through; but "going into action" acted miraculously upon their fevered minds.

"Pat," said Eustace to his companions, "I'm better, thanks be to God, I can march finely this morning; is this *my* rifle? he said, looking at the beautiful weapon with something of fire in his eyes. "Maybe I'll hear it ring at rale work at last."

"Eustace, my man, you must remain behind" said I.

"Sure I'm better, Captain, thanks be to God," said the poor fellow, endeavouring to put his rifle on his shoulder. While he held the weapon on the ground it acted as a support, but when he attempted to put it on his shoulder the support was withdrawn, and he would have fallen were it not for one of his companions who supported him. But there it was again; another flash and a rumble. And we moved away, this time to meet the enemy. It was about 2 a.m. when we started, and we plodded for two hours, the booming of the cannon becoming more distinct as we sped along. We had marched about eight miles, and then an occasional shell flew around our ears, and at last we were under fire. The country was undulating, and we could see nothing except an occasional flash, either from small arms or field pieces. We moved along behind a ridge that protected us from the flying projectiles, and we soon found ourselves in the neighbourhood of St. Florent, where some *Gardes Mobiles* were holding a detachment of Bavarians in check, awaiting our arrival. The news soon spread. The people of the town, or village, were all astir and we were received with cries of "Vive la Legion; Vive la Legion." This was the name originally given to the "Foreign Regiment." It used to be "Foreign Legion," now it is "Foreign Regiment." The shouts refreshed us all, and we moved quickly through the town, up to the place where the *Mobiles* were stationed. We then learned the situation. There were, it was supposed; about 3,000 Bavarians, with eight guns in our front, while there were about the same number of *Mobiles*.

to meet them. The position was singularly favouring able for defense. A stream, narrow but deep, ran upon both sides of our position, beyond which, however, we had placed detachments to prevent an attempt to play upon our flanks. It was not yet day when we received the order to advance, and it so happened that it was the turn of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* to lead the attack in skirmishing order. It was then just commencing to be daybreak, and we moved to the front in three detachments, leaving wide spaces of about one hundred yards between each detachment to allow our mitrailleuse to fire through. We engaged the Bavarians about ten minutes afterwards, and for two hours had some long range play, at which not much harm was done, and by which nothing was achieved. Meanwhile the *Mobiles* upon our right had weakened their line in endeavouring to outflank the enemy, and the keen-eyed Germans saw the chance and made a brilliant dash out from their covering, to penetrate our centre, while some dragoons rode around our flanks and drove in the thin and too extended lines of which they were composed. But our regiment was in reserve, my company alone having been engaged, and springing from off his horse our gallant Colonel drew his sword and called out, "*En avant mes enfants, en avant.*" The Bavarians had not counted upon meeting a regiment of the regular army; but nothing daunted they pushed across the open space and met us fairly in the open. For a few minutes the bullets flew in showers around us, and bronzed-faced veterans and smooth-faced youths alike went down to rise no more. But there was no think-

of that then. The intoxicating spirit of battle was upon all, and many men sprang madly to the front when our gallant old colonel fell, and the new *Commandant* shouted out "*a la bayonet; a la bayonet.*" Outnumbered two to one the Germans fled across the open field, but their guns and mitrailleuses were handled with such dexterity that we did not dare to follow. They regained their shelter upon the margin of the wood, out of which we in vain attempted to shell them, and they retreated that night, leaving nothing except a few broken rifles, and some knapsacks behind. We afterwards learned that there were only 2,000 Bavarians in our front that day, and that they lost about fourteen men killed and wounded, our loss being ten killed and thirty-one wounded. I lost two men killed and one severely wounded. Next day we were on their track but they had escaped, and must have regained their main body, of which they formed a strong reconnoitering party. The day after this affair we heard of the capitulation of Phalsbourg, after a siege of four months, on December 12th, and now the only fortress in Lorraine left to the French was Bitsche. Montmedy surrendered on the 14th, but the gallant resistance of Chanzzy from the 10th to the 15th, proved that there was mettle in the French troops still. Bourbaki had departed on his eastern dash, leaving our corps—the 15th—to watch Prince Frederick Charles, who was then manœuvring in front of Bourges, with the defence of which we were intrusted. The spirits of the troops were indeed almost broken at this time. The food was bad and insufficient, the clothing of the men fell in tatters,

and their shoes were in many cases worn from off their feet. Our little success encouraged no one but ourselves, it was so small.

About this time Gambetta issued two of his famous decrees. If men's feet were blistered, or ulcered, or frost-bitten, and a soldier, doubled up with the weight of his miseries fell behind, he was to be court-martialled and perhaps shot.

"Better supply us with a pair of shoes than a pair of handcuffs," I heard a soldier beside me say to his companion, Timothy Marks, as we trudged over the broken road; "Better look after our wants than make new hardships for us, for we have enough of them already."

But we were away again after a day or two, through a country watered with the tributaries of the Loire; hurrying on through the quiet villages where the *pay-sans* stared in gaping wonder at the passing troops, where village girls arch their eyebrows and either pity or joke with the soldiers as they march by, where little children look vaguely and wildly into our faces, and little boys wear gay cockades, beat miniature drums, carry the tricolor in groups, and make mimic warfare upon their companions. The sun climbs over the ridge of hills that skirt the eastern horizon, and bathes us in a flood of light. An occasional halt, men falling to the rear, and limbs weary again, but on still until the sun sinks away over the undulating country to the far west, and night is once more monarch of the scene. But our destination was made at last. In the distance nimbus-like clouds hovered above a clump of trees in

our front, and we rightly conjectured that our corps was encamped beneath the shade of the grateful boughs, which our imagination pictured as hanging in picturesque fondness over some bubbling stream, and where wood and water was abundant. At last the confines of a town are reached, and after a little delay, we rattle into St. Florent with its 5,000 inhabitants. Outside the town the troops rested in *échelon* on the slopes of the gently rising ground in the neighbourhood. The low tents huddled together, looked at a distance like flocks of sheep grazing. Not a drunken man was to be seen in or about the place. The wine shops were not quite empty, but they were in no case crowded. A few busy men entered their doors from time to time, filled their canteens with wine, and hastened away. While we halted beside the road, a general followed by six or seven of his staff, entered a *café* beside the road, ate what was placed before him in a few minutes, drank his *demi tasse* of coffee, and quickly vanished with his companions. Officers in red and blue *kepis*, some of whom know the secrets of the gods, and are more mysterious than augurs, moved about. The commissariat continues its purchases, and *fourriers* are making hard bargains with illiberal shopkeepers. Little herds of oxen, waggons loaded with flour, defile into the streets, and the bargain struck, are sent on their way towards one camp or the other. But loiterers are not to be seen. The troops are all in camp, and here comes our companions of the 39th regiment of infantry, white with dust, and looking weary and footsore. Behind it but by another road, arrives a

troop of hussars, haughty and defiant, upon their Hungarian chargers. Warlike figures they are, noble in expression, from the captain down to the youngest soldier. They came from afar: their caps of fur, their jackets, saddles, and camp utensils piled up around them and hanging to their horses' saddles, contain the dust of nearly forty miles of travel. Our corps too, must be again *en route*, and we hurry out of town, pass the boulevards, picketed horses, troops in line, baggage and ammunition waggons, sergeants calling company rolls, on to our division, our brigade, our regiment, and we arrive just in time to hear the command "*en route*" as we rattled away for the small village of St. Florent.

"M'Alevey," I said to my lieutenant, as we marched together a little to the left of the leading files of the company, "you are somewhat sad lately. Your tone of conversation has suddenly changed from the gay to the melancholy. Are you really afflicted with that passion which is 'doomed to mourn,' or has that letter you received yesterday opened anew some old wound in the crevices of your affections?"

"Perhaps," replied the lieutenant, placing his hand, with theatrical grace, upon that portion of his great coat that covered the region of his heart, "I may have determined to devote myself to one Eve instead of many."

"The richest joke of the day," said one of the officers, Kuess, joining us; "M'Alevey touched by the tender passion—seized with 'an insane desire to pay for a woman's board,' as I heard himself once say."

"You are a brute, Kuess," replied M'Alevey. "You Poles are as phlegmatic as Esquimaux."

"You are a little astray, M'Alevey," said Kuess. "We Poles when we love, we love but once in our lives. With us love is indeed 'as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave,' as I think Solomon sang. You Irish too often admire the face, or the symmetry of form, and think you love the possessor of such charms. We Poles love the mind, but only admire the face or figure."

"Oh, you are on your metaphysics again," said M'Alevey, with a slight shake of his head, but evidently troubled about the Pole's reasoning.

"Well, I'm giving you the logic of my school of thinkers. The man who loves a woman for her mind, who finds in her ideas a reciprocity of sentiment, who reads in her thoughts a character in unison with his own, that man loves indeed."

"And has beauty, the gift that 'is a joy for ever,' no power to hold a man's love as pure and as constant as what you call 'the love mind?'" asked M'Alevey.

"None whatever," said Kuess, with a determined shake of his handsome and well-formed head. "Beauty may catch, but the mind alone can hold the affections. I would not give the value of a round of cartridges for the love of a man whose affections had been moved by the passing beauty of the fairest belle in all your little island."

"Oh, you are a brute, and remind me of my Byron—

'The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name.'

"Your Byron was a false teacher; he could be no philosopher. I think, too," replied Kuess, "that I read somewhere in a German translation of your Shakespeare that—

'Love looks not with eyes, but with the mind,
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind.'

"M'Alevey, I'm afraid that last letter accounts for this sudden change in the temper of your reasoning," I said, looking at my lieutenant, who sighed, raised his *kepi*, and smiled with a somewhat melancholy expression, which I readily interpreted into "yes."

But as day wore on, and fatigue and hunger wore out the endurance of the troops, many of the men were compelled to fall behind, and too often into the custody of the *gens d'armes* who followed us *en route*. Some of the men were by this time bare-footed, and limped along the sides of the road with a painful effort. Amongst the rest, poor Timothy Marks was shoeless, and the blood trickled from more than one vicious-looking sore, as he shuffled with unsteady gait upon our flank. He would not give up, no not as long as there was a stride in his weary limbs, and he carried his rifle, ammunition, pack and accoutrements as gaily as a man could under such painful circumstances. His spirit was not broken, but it was crushed, and he still found time to give a well deserved snarl at the impecuniosity of the authorities, who were so well performing the work of demoralisation, even more effectually than the victories of the Red Prince, Manteuffel, or Von der Tann. But we were promised a rest at the next town, where our broken ranks might have time to

close up, our men be provided with shoes and clothing, and where for a few nights we could stretch our limbs upon gorgeous beds of straw.

The little village we made at night was crammed with troops, who were almost bursting through the frail walls of the cottages of the *paysans* and *bourgeoisie* of the place. We were always the last to be provided for, by virtue of our company's number in the battalion. There were at all times seven companies to cater to before we entered into the consideration of our *Commandant*. After a march, too, the work of providing food was often a fatiguing and troublesome duty for the *sergent-fourrier*. I have known Henry M'Crossin to be for hours trying to obtain food for the soldiers of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, even after a march of thirty or forty kilometres the same day. Like the rest of the troops, the sergeants were often miserably provided with shoes, and M'Crossin was no exception to his rank. He had often to labor when other men were taking refreshing naps upon manure heaps or logs of wood, anywhere but not on the cold, wet and clayey soil. This evening however, it failed even the energetic spirit and active mind of Sergeant M'Crossin to obtain food for the famished soldiers. The poor fellow became disconsolate, as he was pushed about by the numerous sergeants who were on a similar mission for their own men. He fought hard enough, but he had neither the physical energy nor the wild effrontery to succeed at all times upon such a mission.

"I can't succeed, Captain," he said, as he returned empty-handed; "there is a terrific rush for food, and

everything is so wretchedly organised that I fear I must wait an hour or two."

"Bring Sergeant Carey with you," I said, "and perhaps he may make some impression upon the crowd," and soon Carey was stepping towards the stores with determined strides, and a countenance which bore the impress of "do or die" upon its every lineament. I watched him as he was about to enter the door, already blocked with equally eager but less persistent men, as Carey, followed by his fatigue party, pushed his way through the throng.

"*La Compagnie Irlandaise, La Compagnie Irlandaise*, make way, make way," and soon the surprised throng of Frenchmen caught the spirit of the words, and generously replied, "Make way, make way for *La Compagnie Irlandaise*," and Carey quickly returned with rations to the hungry and famished soldiers of his company.

CHAPTER IX.

"He jests at scars, that never felt a wound."

SHAKESPEARE.

"*La Compagnie Irlandaise*" was billeted at the château of La Subdery. The handsome building stood in the centre of a clump of trees, surrounded by open meadow and pasture lands. It was the residence of one of the *noblesse* of France, and its turreted angles topped the neighbouring timber, and stood out sharp, clear, and bold against the moonlit atmosphere

beyond. There was, indeed, no princely demesne, nor deer-park, nor artificial ponds, to show the lordly rank of the proprietor,—such things are almost unknown in democratic France—but there was the usual courtly tone about the surroundings that in itself stamped the château as the property and residence of a man of rank. But the family had gone: “The son and heir to the war, *messieurs*, as a simple soldier, and we hear that he has been promoted to be sergeant for distinguished conduct at the battle of Orleans,” said the aged caretaker who guarded the place and property of the proprietor. Here was one sample, at least, of the ennobling spirit of patriotic love. Here was the only son of a long line of *noblesse*, the heir to what in France is a princely fortune—£5,000 per annum—the little king of a little principality, renouncing all, and, in the ranks of the *Gardes Mobile*, standing shoulder to shoulder, a private, with the *paysans* and *bourgeoisie* of his native locality. France, so “fruitful in brave wits,” gave the best and bravest of her sons to her country. France, “the land of scholars, and the nurse of arms,” with all her wild, passionate faults, stood as one man under the tricolor, even when amidst the darkest passages of that eventful war there was no rift in the cloud of her uninterrupted disaster. The patriotism of the French, at this period at least, is almost unsurpassed either in modern or ancient history. Communists, Republicans, Imperialists, Legitimists, and Orleanists—all, as one man, renounced party, and allowed their differences to stand in abeyance until they had either sunk or swam together. When it is considered that politi-

cal antagonism in France is a passion—that political faith is too often the only creed of one or more sections of the people—that they regard the triumph of their party with a political madness—it is no trifling sacrifice to renounce all these and stand shoulder to shoulder in the ranks of the common service, for the common cause. This is patriotism of the highest type, and deserves the highest commendation. But there is a sad yet glorious history of the career of the young Frenchman under the shadow of whose ancestral home we slept the sleep that fatigue induces—the sleep of regenerating rest. Poor fellow, he fell during the gallant retreat of Chanzy towards Le Mans. I afterwards heard the story of his death, around which there was something of romantic interest. “It was on the margin of a wood, *mon Capitaine*,” said my informant; “the Bavarians were pressing hard upon our flank, with their accustomed tactics—for one of the first features of their military code is, ‘gain the flank of your enemy upon every possible occasion.’ At this time young Monsieur La Fonte was sous-lieutenant, and during the day his captain and his lieutenant had been put *hors de combat*. His company was covering the retreat, and he halted his men under cover of the timber to check the Bavarian advance. To him the whistle of the bullets was but as sweet music in his ears, for he was a true soldier—a worthy scion of that ancient line. But the enemy pressed closer; La Fonte gave the order to fix bayonets, and just as the Bavarians were about to carry the wood, he at the head of the *Mobiles* of La Subdery met them in their advance, foot to foot,

bayonet to bayonet, eye to eye, and was himself first to spring upon his man. But," he added, looking sorrowfully upon the snow-covered ground, "the villainous steel of a German *cochon* entered his heart, and sent his soul to his Maker." But all this was an after-event. That night, at the château of La Subdery, we had joyous anticipations of a few days' rest. Take a peep into the hay-loft to which the Irish soldiers had been told off, see how happily the wearied men stretch out upon the heaps of straw that abundantly cover the floor. You can read fatigue in the listless and wearied motions of the men as they sink into the yielding piles. Packs and belts hang from the wooden pegs that protrude through the wall, while the rifles are piled with scrupulous care in the corners of the room. Sleep appears to have already overtaken the majority of the men, while a few whose duty it is to cook the food of their respective squads are making vigorous attempts to light fires in the courtyard of the château. The clothes of all are soiled and torn, while blistered and bandaged feet tell a tale of suffering. But

"Who breathes must suffer, who thinks must mourn,
And he alone is bless'd who ne'er was born."

The caretaker, too, had his tale of sorrow. His son had fallen a victim to fell disease, and died in hospital.

"He was all I had to look to in this world, *monsieur*, my only boy, his mother's darling, his sister's hope.

But there is no time for vain regret. The bustle of a soldier's life gives sorrow to the winds. Rest, and be thankful. Rest upon a veritable bed, with luxurious feathers and handsome counterpanes, and fatigue

to lull you to refreshing sleep. How invitingly did the soft beds sink beneath the exhausted frames of those who could secure the comforts of that abode! How refreshing it was to take off the boots from the wearied and blistered feet, and then, when partly undressed, to sink into a refreshing slumber upon the yielding feathers! Men, after all, must experience hardships to appreciate even primitive civilization. Sleep upon the stony surface of a ploughed field in winter-time, have the frost eating into your bones and benumbing your limbs, be hungry for the time, let cold, famine, and *la misère* obtain full control over your system, and just get one night's repose upon a yielding bed of any material, and if you do not enjoy it I am no reader of human nature, nor experienced in the same. And then fancy, after all your pleasant thoughts—after your happy and refreshing rest in prospective—fancy to be rudely shaken out of your slumbers, after four hours' sleep, and hear that the regiment was already away! It was a discordant sound that was uttered into my ear that morning when some one shrieked:—

“Captain, captain, the ‘March’ of the regiment has sounded; the battalion is under arms; the enemy is in the neighbourhood!”

Then a scene of bustle and confusion followed. But it was only for a few minutes, and we soon burst away, over ploughed lands and vineyards, on to St. Florent again, where the waters of the Ouron course through the usually quiet thoroughfares, and where we were destined to have two days' happy and refreshing repose. It was Sunday, too, and the

Angelus bell sounded beautifully soft upon the calm, still air. When we halted for a moment at the outskirts of the village, I remember falling away into one of my dreamy moods, and humming a familiar air about "Sweet bells of music stealing round about me as I lay," when M'Alevey came to my side and asked if I could'nt "whistle a jig for a change."

"M'Alevey, you're a hair-brained fellow," I answered, amused at his importunities.

"If getting bald is an evidence, I certainly am, Captain," he replied, tracing his fingers around the upper portion of his scalp.

"As I told you—marked for the cloister, M'Alevey."

"No; I have, as Kuess charges me with, an insane desire to pay for a woman's board, and if I pull through the war, I have made up my mind to do so," said the Lieutenant, once more placing his hand upon the well-polished regimental buttons of his great-coat.

"You are incorrigible."

"No, Captain, you don't understand me, that's all. You see with all our boasted civilization and progress, man neither knows himself nor his neighbours. We have never gotten beyond the idea of 'instinct' for the soul power of animals, nor can we, with all our sciences and refinement, solve the problem of 'why a spaniel wags its tail, or what a lobster thinks.'"

"Philosophical, by Jove. Why, man, your attainments are as varied as Crichton's," broke in the Doctor; "but," he added, "what is to be"—

"To be!" replied M'Alevey, without giving the Doctor time to complete the sentence, "why it's a verb of course."

"Oh, nonsense, M'Alevey, you'll never be easy, until you don sackcloth, and ashes," replied the Doctor, moving towards an officer, the purple facings of whose single-breasted tunic, pronounced him to be a doctor too, and both immediately returned and asked me to accompany them to a church which stood before us, and over the door of which the red-cross flag waved its international emblem in peaceful and charitable assurance. "*Secours aux blessés*" was written in large characters upon a white flag, and maimed and disabled soldiers loitered around the entrance, their pale and emaciated countenances, broken limbs, empty sleeves, and ugly gashes, too plainly telling the origin of their troubles. Sisters of Mercy promenaded the spacious aisles of the church, and hung, with tender solicitude, over the hard-breathing soldiers, who whispered their wishes into their ears. The seats had all been removed, and the men were arranged in rows, from the door to the altar, and the beautifully clean coverings that were placed upon the straw, were here and there dotted with blood stains. There were no bedsteads, but there was a delicacy in the careful folds of the counterpanes, and neatness in the improvised regularity with which the wounded men were surrounded. The first bed Dr. Macken visited was that of a *Franc-tireur* who had been shot through the body, the bullet having struck him in the chest, about four inches above the heart, and passed out of his back a little to the left of the spine. The poor fellow underwent the changes of his bandages and syringing of the ghastly wound in his back with the greatest fortitude, only moaning

once slightly as the fresh plugs of lint were applied and strapped on. For him as well as for the next four men who underwent inspection there was no hope of recovery. "They are all dead men," said the doctor, as he passed them by. Four out of five of them were shot through the lungs—one of them as handsome a young fellow as ever I set eyes on. Not a man flinched or swooned whilst under the surgeon's hands, although the agony of being moved must have been fearful in every case. But the stoutest case of self-command I witnessed throughout my visits to the hospital-church at La Sabdery was shown by a young man of the Breton *Gardes Mâbles*. He was a stalwart, broad-chested, beardless lad, with large rough-hewn features, and great muscular development. He had only just been brought in, with a terrific hole under his right shoulder, plugged up by the field-surgeon after he had lost a great quantity of blood, and this was his first inspection since his arrival. He sat up in his bed quite steadily whilst his wound was being uncovered, and never shrunk forward once from the doctor's touch.

"Has the bullet been taken out, my man," said Dr. Macken, looking at the jagged edges of the wound with his eyes half shut, as if to concentrate his sight and to pierce the depths of the orifice.

"I really don't know, sir," replied the wounded soldier, with a degree of coolness that surprised the well-steeled nerves of Dr. Macken himself.

"The report says it has, but I find it has not," said the Doctor, after his carefully-trained fingers had tapped the neighbourhood of the wound. "Would you like to have it out?"

"Yes, if you please, sir."

"Will you take chloroform, or do you think you can stand it?"

"Oh, I can stand it, sir, unless you prefer giving me chloroform."

"Very well; lie down and keep quite steady."

The projectile, which had entered the young man's back under the right shoulder-blade, had been stopped by the collar-bone, under which it had lodged deep down in the flesh—too deep, indeed, to be got at with the probe—so there was nothing for it but to cut down to it from the other side. The operation, which was splendidly executed by Dr. Macken, took exactly one minute and twenty seconds from the insertion of the knife to the strapping-up of the new wound, during which time the young soldier never blenched, nor moved his head, nor clenched his hands, nor even breathed hard. I never witnessed such an example of stoicism before. The projectile extracted proved to be a mitrailleuse bolt quite knocked out of shape by its concussion with the young man's collar-bone, which must have been of no ordinary hardness, judging by its powers of resistance. As soon as the Doctor pulled out the bolt and had it washed, he handed it to the young man, saying, "There is something for you to remember the Germans by, my lad." Upon which, raising himself, he thanked Dr. Macken as calmly as if having an ounce or so of lead cut out of his body were the most ordinary occurrence of his every-day life, and then he submitted himself to the hands of the *infirmier*, who touched him as delicately as an infant.

The stretcher had been used more than once while we were making the rounds, and more than one body was brought out to be deposited in its last resting-place. Priests were bending with pious solicitude over the sinking form of many a stricken soldier, and cheering their last moments with words of hope and prayer. If you look to the farthest end of the church, just beside the railings, where devout communicants were wont to receive the sacrament, you may see a priest kneeling over a man, whose soul appears about to quit "its mortal frame;" the left hand of the pious man supports the head of the sinking soldier, while a crucifix is held before his eyes, and he clasps his hands in holy recognition to the will of God. A Sister of Charity bends over the dying man, and looks calmly into the eyes which are already becoming glazed with the dim shadows of death. Closer and nearer still bends the *abbé*, and he presses the crucifix upon the lips of the sinking soldier; the eyes of the good sister open a little wider, she takes his hand and applies her well-trained fingers to his pulse, looking steadily into the patient's eyes just for a minute, and then the hand is gently placed upon the bed-covering, the head is allowed to fall upon the pillow; the priest and nun join their voices in prayer—the soldier is dead. In the whole history of human charity there is no more touching picture than the tender compassion, the anxious hope, and the pious care of holy people over the bed of a dying human being. The soldier dies for honour or glory, and risks life and limb for visionary dreams of triumphs in the future; but the priest, or Sister of Mercy who renounce much of the

comforts of the world, who can hope for no earthly honour, who can anticipate no earthly reward, and who brave death in the hospital, is to my mind, possessed of a higher degree of true courage, than the man who, it may be, dies in action. One is mental, the other is too often physical courage alone. One is true heroism, the other may or may not possess that virtue.

But I am philosophizing again ! I had had enough of the church hospital, and left my medical friends to continue their charitable work while I walked out of the place into the now busy thoroughfare of St. Florent. Here, as elsewhere Sergeant Carey was omnipresent, doing as much service as an orderly-room full of ordinary men. His splendid figure might be seen darting here and there with rapid but dignified ease. When I came to the door, his handsome face, illuminated with a smile, beamed upon me, and I felt the effect of the influence which his generous voice cast upon my mind. I knew there was something unusual the matter as he advanced towards me holding a fowl in his hand. He got the bird as a present from a woman whom he had just befriended, and he came up to me with the jocular but well-remembered remark, while he saluted with soldierly grace :

"Well, Captain, luck has favored me for once. Here I am getting a beautiful and a delicate dinner for nothing, when the order of events has been to have nothing for dinner;" and he walked away to attend to some matter of detail, leaving me full of admiration for his irrepressible humour and indefatigable power of endurance.

Our two days at St. Florent wore pleasantly away. The usual routine of a soldier's duty was not interrupted by anything which left its impress on my memory. Gambetta had indeed come to St. Florent, and was closeted with the municipal officials and the military chiefs for a short time on the first day, and then we once more paraded to take our departure again for Bourges, which we now began to look upon as a kind of home. It was a lovely day as we stood in line in front of our comfortable quarters awaiting the word which was to give us the route. The sun's rays shone with brilliant significance upon the rifles of the men, whose weather-beaten countenances, hardy expressions, and tattered raiment, pronounced the dangers and the trials they had already surmounted. But we were away at last—away over the uninteresting country watered by the Ouron—away to Bourges with its happy associations and pleasant reminiscences of days gone by.

I was thinking of our chances, and speculating upon our hopes, as we trudged along the road, through the flat and unbroken country around, when the tall towers of the cathedral of Bourges again stood out against the cloudless sky. The grand old structure, with its deeply-recessed portals, its bas-reliefs, its rows of niches, its florid Norman ornaments, its unsightly flying buttresses, its beautifully painted windows, and its happy associations, was once more in view. Beneath its very shadow, almost under the protection of its wings, lived the dearest and most friendly of our many friends in France. We were sure of at least a hearty welcome just within the

limits of that gigantic shadow-making structure. Yes, there is something in the words of Robert Blair, "friendship is the cement of the soul; the sweet'ner of life." It is something to know that a generous welcome awaits the weary and the foot-sore; it is something to feel a conscious monitor drawing the sentiments of the heart towards the abode of kind friends, where kindred spirits meet with kindred longings. It is something to know that in the desert of the heart there is one oasis to which the weary thinker may turn with hopeful longings, and bask beneath the protecting shade of friendship's tree. If only for a moment, it is something to know that, even in the great distance, beyond the seas if you like, there is one hand that would like to grasp your own in joyous welcome. Part with friends, go on a campaign, hold your life in your hands, and return, even for an hour, and if you do not feel as genuine pleasure as mortal can experience, I am much in error.

But Bourges was still before us. The country was flat and undrained, and the prospect of a comfortless night broke down the spirits of the men. Marks and some others were still barefooted. The pebbles, which were abundantly strewn along our route, created sores, and the frost ate holes, into many a brave fellow's foot. Sergeant Terence Byrne marched at the head of the company, his honest countenance reflecting the character of as brave a man, and as gentle a Christian, as ever wore a side-arm or nursed a stricken enemy. There was indeed no regularity in the steps of the soldiers as they shuffled along, they were marching *a volonté*.

But there was irrepressible mirth still in the ranks of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, Sergeant Carey would have his joke in spite of frost or famine. Once as the weakly were vainly endeavouring to keep up with the rapid marching, I heard him remonstrating, and encouraging them on. Each poor fellow had his plea, either sore feet, or a ponderous and useless knapsack. One indeed complained at the benumbing frost, and soon after I heard Carey advise the lagsters to "keep up men, keep up, sure the closer you are the warmer you'll be;" and then the men behind gave a spurt into the ranks again, to fall away by degrees, until another word of encouragement caused them to make a still further effort to keep the pace.

But "the noiseless foot of time" brings on the day. The sun works around the arch of heaven, and sinks away into the darkening space beyond. The keen wind ripples through the branches of the poplar trees that everywhere line the way, and speeds upon its mission over the neatly cultivated lands upon our flank. Empty vaulted night brings gloomy forebodings to the wearied soldiers, as they still shuffle on hoping to make their destination before the witching hours. At last, a glow of flame illumines our front; you can see it like a pall of fire in the great distance, and your fancy pictures the tired soldiers crouching around the innumerable bivouacs before us. But on still a few kilometres more, and the outskirts of Bourges is made, and the men throw themselves upon the slimy ground to rest! But no, there is little rest for a soldier on campaign. Fatigue parties have to get wood, more food, and a few make a vain and

unsuccessful effort to beg some bundles of straw from a neighbouring château.

"Well," said Timothy Marks, looking down at the ground, and scanning the place he had to lie upon as keenly as if it were a bed of thistles; "well, sure it's soft anyhow, there's no danger of getting bed-sores or any other sores from coming in contact with genuine, soft soil."

"Who knows, maybe we'll have worse before the campaign is over," said one of Tim's companions, trying to find some consolation in the present.

"That's pleasant anyhow," replied Tim, as he spread his little blanket on the ground, and unrolled his patch of tent-cloth. "Maybe we would have a worse bed than this, but if we do, I hope it 'ill be on the *other* side of the ground," he continued, placing an emphasis on "other" that made it suggestive of "under."

"We'll go to Bourges after we settle everything for the night, M'Alevey," said I to the Lieutenant, when we know where we are to be encamped we shall go and have the comfort of meeting old faces and the luxury of being entertained in a Christian house once more;" and we consoled ourselves with the prospect of a bright vision in the evening. But we were astray in our reckoning. Our clothes were bespattered with loam and tanned with exposure, and our faces were sun-burned and dirty. We were in fact, *comme à la guerre*, and presented no holiday appearance as we looked at each other and speculated on the propriety of facing our lady friends. But we could perhaps find some place in Bourges where we could make ourselves presentable, and then after a few instructions

to Lieutenant Cotter, who was on duty, we floundered back to Bourges. But the military authorities disposed of our propositions in their own way. There was no admittance to the town without an order from the colonel, countersigned by the general of division, which involved as much red-tapeism as would prevent any ordinary mind from even attempting the ordeal. There was nothing for it but to return to camp and reconcile ourselves with a piece of sea-biscuit and a tin of coffee, and then seek the shelter of our canvas walls.

CHAPTER X.

"When the nations made queens by our triumphs
 Showered flowers on the conqueror's head—
 That, that was the moment to perish;
 Be ye envied, ye dead!"

BERANGER.

The following morning was the 17th of December, 1870. It was somewhat warm too, and the sun's rays melted the patches of snow into pools of water, and the tramp of 20,000 men had made the encampment a sea of mud. The men had no straw the night before, and were compelled to lie upon the muddy earth, with their little blankets under them, and nothing but a miserably small tent to secure them from the freaks of atmospheric nature. Like many other things in the French army, the equipment of the troops was in every way unserviceable. The *kepi* looks neat and jaunty in garrison. It sets off a soldier to perhaps the best advantage, so long as it is

kept in order, but on campaign the *kepi* is neither neat nor serviceable. It loses shape, fits badly, and the peak droops and goes out of form. It is, too, an uncomfortable night-cap—an adaptability that should by no means be lost sight of in a soldier's forage head-dress. In the German army the forage-cap is serviceable but unsightly. It cannot lose shape, because it has no shape to lose. It never looks badly, because it never looked too well. The forage-cap of a German soldier is in every way more suited for a campaign than the French *kepi*; still the latter sits more jauntily, and looks more graceful on the boulevards, or "during the piping time of peace." The great-coat of the French soldier, too, has nothing to recommend it but its colour, which is admirably selected, and, perhaps, the least distinguishable at a given distance of any in the armies of Europe. But the material is bad and thin, and it gives but little warmth or protection to the famished soldiers. The coat of the German soldier is, on the contrary, warm and serviceable. The material is thick, and tolerably good. Then, too, the Germans go on campaign with their tunics under their great-coats; while the French troops take only their shell-jackets. There are no flannels served out in the French army, while in Germany under-flannels are one of the essential requisites of a soldier's kit. The French carry small patches of canvas about five feet square, and by joining four of them together a little tent is made, which, if it were better regulated, would become a really serviceable portion of their equipment. But, above all, the Germans had the advantage in their method of

shoeing their men. Every German was provided with boots, into which the pantaloons were put, and which almost effectually secured the feet from frost and pebbles. In France the soldiers are not even provided with socks, and many of the soldiers of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* were compelled to suffer all the hardships of the campaign, in an atmosphere fifteen degrees below zero, without a pair of stockings upon their feet, and, too often, the shoes worn into shoddy. The Germans very often encase their feet in the folds of a long thin stripe of greased calico, carefully wrapped around the member, and which I believe to be the best of all safeguards from the effects of frost. It would appear, indeed, from the respective equipments of the combatant armies, that the one had studied the art of war in all its details—that the other had not. Through this means the war became a war between rival organisations, as much as a war between men. It became a war of boots, of clothing, of provisions, and of internal regimental economy. Place a regiment of Prussian infantry in our place at Bourges on the 17th of December, 1870,—let them be almost shoeless, and the keen air penetrating through their shoddy garments, after a restless night spent on the clayey ground—and place the *Regiment Etranger* for one night in a town, give them boots and good clothing, and one meal of Liebig's extract of meat, and an encounter might result in disaster to the usually victorious Germans.

But still another night had passed. The *reveille* had sounded once more, and the smoke from hundreds

of camp-fires gave notice that the morning meal was in preparation. The hurry of the coming *en route* was again on foot, for we had another day's march before us. Beside our encampment, the soldiers of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* had surrounded and vigorously hacked at the hindquarter of a dead charger, like a swarm of bees over a bunch of honeysuckle. Huge steaks were cut off from the still warm carcase, and the sword-bayonets of the men rattled against the ribs and flanks of the dead *cheval*. It was a sight for an artist's pencil. Famine appeared to give vigour to the men's arms, and the prospect of a meal traced an expression of joy over their countenances.

"Poor fellows," said Lieutenant M'Alevey, as he sat upon a soldier's knapsack sipping a cup of coffee that his orderly had prepared for him; "poor fellows, a soldier's life on campaign is a round of miseries, hunger, cold, and hardship; but," he added, tracing his fingers along the *frisé* edges of his moustache, and expressively half-closing his eyes by a dreamy movement of the eyelids, "but, after all, its joys more than compensate for its sorrows. For my own part I am never comfortable except when I am 'seeking the bubble reputation,'" and the Lieutenant sipped his coffee, and handed a neatly-finished revolver to his orderly to be cleaned.

In the meantime, *resistance à outrance* was still the cry in France. Prince Frederick-Charles threatened Bourges; the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, Tours; and Manteuffel, Havre, in order to prevent Chanzy from Vendôme, Bourbaki from Gien, or Faidherbe from St. Quentin, from relieving Paris. Chanzy had

still 150,000 soldiers well in hand, and was now entrenched around the formidable field works before Le Mans. He had too 300 well-served guns, but his troops were in poor condition. Bourbaki was mysteriously moving towards the East with 130,000 men, including our corps, the 15th, which was to follow him in the early days of January. But the German commanders were manœuvring to give the *coup de grace* to the armies of France. Already Chanzy was threatened in front and flank, thus compelling him to show two fronts, by attacking him at right angles—the tactics that succeeded so well in the Bohemian angles. Such a mode of attack itself implies a contempt for one's enemies, inasmuch as it offends against the rule of attacking with inferior numbers, but the German commanders often, throughout the war, set tactics aside, and acted upon examples as much as principles.

The duty of our corps was still to protect Bourges. An unexpected event however, prevented Prince Frederick Charles from advancing beyond Vierzon, and our marching and counter-marching was all to no avail. No rest for the wearied troops, but continuous and harassing marches. Even the muddy soil in the neighbourhood of the old Gallic city would have been an acceptable place of repose to the wearied troops, but owing to our want of cavalry our commanders were so ill-advised about the movements of the enemy that they very often found themselves groping in the dark. No rest, but away again; this time for Bressy, a village about twenty kilometres from Bourges. Our Brigade was soon in line, and we quickly left the smouldering camp fires behind.

I suppose I must have been looking serious, for my witty lieutenant came to my side, and looking in my face began to speculate upon the bent of my thoughts, whether they were of "love, religion, or war."

"None," I replied, "As to 'love,' I'll leave all that to you."

"You think me light and flippant upon that subject, Captain, but ruffled water sometimes takes deep soundings. Remember your Byron, and think that I too, may have 'sighed to many, though I loved but one.'"

"You surprise me, M'Alevey. I thought you incapable of the tender passion. I always took you to be a man after John Keat's idea, a being 'whose philosophy would clip an angel's wings.'"

"No," said the lieutenant somewhat sadly, "not always. I have my own reflections, the incidents that have schooled my thoughts to wander to one spot in that dear little isle of ours. But" he added, looking at a handsomely cut cross that stood beside the way, "what is this?" and M'Alevey walked over to note the lines that were carved upon its surface.

Just then the *sac-a-terre* sounded, and I moved over and joined him on his mission.

"We stand upon classic ground," said M'Alevey, when he had read the inscription that was carved upon the face of the cross. "Here the English suffered defeat by the inhabitants of Bourges in 1356, see," he added, pointing to the inscription:—

"Croix erigée en souvenir de la victoire remportée sur les Anglais par les habitants de Bourges. En 1356."

"*Vive la France*," said Captain Ceresole, coming to our side and saluting the cross, or perhaps the inscription, that appealed to his soldier heart.

"*Vive la France et l'Irlande*," said M'Alevey, turning to the new arrival, and doffing his *kepi* with courteous salutation.

"The English bit the dust here," said Ceresole, looking around the hard, flat country, "and by my soul, a fine place it was for a rout. How our cavalry must have ridden the islanders down over those unsheltered lands. Of course, all your men are somewhat unfriendly in their temper to the English?" he added, looking at me through his blue coloured spectacles.

"No," I answered, "they are not. They may object to British rule over Ireland, but they do not object to British connection with Ireland." I thought Ceresole's remarks unfair, but just then the *sac-a-dos* sounded—packs on—and we left the scene without entering into further discussion.

But Bourges is now before us, and we quickly make the outer earthworks of the town. Fatigue parties are still busy, making trenches, building traverses, sloping counter-scarps, working at gabions, erecting barricades, or arranging sand-bags. There is bustle about the arsenal, and the military workshops have the appearance of being in a fever of business.

But we press on through the town, and once more enter the open country beyond. The constant passage of artillery, military trains and soldiers have made deep ruts in the road, and there is mud everywhere. The Irish soldiers look hardened, and have the appearance of work in their dress, which is now *comme a la*

guerre. All was not indeed smooth sailing in the ranks of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*. There were three or four men in the company who earned the reputation of being growlers, men into whom the spirit of *Oliver Twist* appeared to have entered, and who were constantly crying for "more, more," of the good things of the service. They were the black sheep of the flock, and stood out in bold relief from their companions. On a line of march it is often a matter of trouble to keep such gentry in order. If a soldier meets some benevolent peasant or bourgeois who treats him to a *carafon* or a *demi tasse* too much, the soldier is likely to forget himself, as all other tipsters do—he may be absent from roll-call, if it is in garrison, and he may lag or shirk his duty, if it happens on the march. In garrison, however, there is the guard-room, and its attendant consequences—fatigue duty, stoppage of pay, confinement to barracks, and all the etceteras arising from bad conduct marks. *En route* however everything changes; guard-rooms would be too troublesome to carry on pack mules, stopping the soldier's pay might affect his health by depriving him of his share in the *ordinaire*, and there is nothing but courts-martial left to the officers in command. During our campaign in France, I have known a sergeant-major to be shot for stealing a fowl, although the poor fellow was ravenously hungry at the time. But they were exceptionally severe in the Foreign Regiment. I heard of another instance in which a sergeant attempted to strike a soldier, the soldier put up his rifle to guard off the blow, the sergeant's hand was cut, and the

soldier was court-martialled and shot. In the other regiments however things were better. In the *Franc-tireurs* particularly, the men had free license to do as they pleased. They were the guerillas of the war. Always well clothed, generally well provided with food, their knapsacks carried on baggage-waggons, the *Franc-tireurs* neither experienced the hardships nor the realities of the campaign. They moved in such small numbers that they were always sure of shelter and food in their wanderings. Their commanders were very often civilians, or national guardsmen, who were not too strict in their interpretation of "regulations," "decrees," or "orders of the day."

With us however it was different. We were part and parcel of the regular army, and had all the duties and hardships of regular troops to encounter. Discipline was rigid enough, too rigid at times; "but it is necessary, sir, it is necessary," as the *Commandant* of our battalion once assured me. "What can we do?" he again appealingly asked. "We cannot send men to prison, for we want them in the field, and I have ever held it to be a maxim in military law that you must shoot a man on campaign for a crime that you would give him fifteen days *salle de police* for during peace," and the *Commandant* extended his arms, shrugged his shoulders, arched his eyebrows, and settled the question to his satisfaction. We, however, managed differently. When the soldiers blundered, we gave them extra duty. They had to attend the *sergent-fourrier* and carry the *vivres* from town, or they had to do an extra sentry-go, or if on

the march they had to carry the rifles of their more careful companions. It was a very handy and persistent means of punishment to give the Chassepot of some weakly and sickly soldier, who was straining every limb to hold out and be in at the death, to some brawny, broad-shouldered man who had forgotten himself or his duty the day before. But it happened more than once in the ranks of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*. In justice, however, I must say that such circumstances were rare, very rare, amongst us. The men appeared to understand their representative capacity—their fidelity to Ireland—their duty to France.

But on still, over ruts, through mud and water, on for Bressy. An occasional halt, a hurried repast, and away again while the sun climbs around in its never-ceasing course. Evening lapses into night, and away before us an occasional light pierces through the gloom, and we draw a fanciful picture of rustic life within the village cottages around. The keen wind moans its requiem through the branches of the trees, and puffs in fretful gusts over and through the deep-set hedges that line our route. Bressy is now before us; a little further on we wheel into a field, take up our *alignement*, pitch tents, light fires, cook a spare repast, and sit around the *bivouac* of another day gone.

CHAPTER XI.

"Hallo! the pipe's gone out—what then
We've reached the spot where I'm to die;
No binding—no! Stand back there, men!
I'll face death with unbandaged eye.
Sorry to trouble you, gentlemen;
But one more service I'll require.
God bless you, lads, safe home again;
Mind you aim low—now!—steady!—FIRE!"

BERANGER'S "*Old Corporal*."

"The reveille has sounded, sir," said a familiar voice the following morning, as the owner endeavoured to untie the frozen cords which drew the stubborn canvas of my tent door together. I could hear the man outside stamping and puffing with that jerky uneasiness which indicates intense cold, as he strove on at his task for a few seconds, and it was not until a chilling blast penetrated through the sheepskin sack into which I had thrust my lower self, that I ventured to peep from under my heap of blankets and sniff the morning air. The sight was not an inviting one. My orderly, for it was he, had his fingers stuck knuckle-deep in his usually handsome mouth, which, you may be sure, was somewhat extended by the operation. The flap of the tent, which by courtesy was called the door, was hanging open, and the frosty prospect without was not agreeably relieved by the shivering sentry who cowered to leeward of an adjoining tent. Snow had fallen and hung upon the upper part of my canvas covering, and formed a curtain-like nightcap, through which icicles traced

geometrical figures adown the side of my tent, like tears of crystal from a silver vase. I could hear the cracking of burning wood, and could see the dim glare of a few fires through the canvas walls, as some shivering soldier endeavoured to keep alive the embers in order to facilitate the making of the morning meal; and then I turned a look upon my attendant—a look half of pity, half of amusement, and I suppose it was the latter expression he detected, for, removing his fingers from his mouth, he half apologetically said:—

“By gad, it’s cowl’d, sir!”

“So I see,” was my reply, as I saw him change his attitude, and for the following moment appeared to have become possessed of the prancing spirit of St. Vitus. But it was cold, and no mistake, that December morning; too cold for human nature to rough it upon the bare frozen earth, left to the mercy of the piercing frost and the paternal watchfulness of those vultures of civilization—army contractors. For my own part, I was tolerably well off; but as I looked at the poor shrivelled being before me, hungry, almost nude, foot-sore, frost-bitten, and wretched, I could only think that man knows not the limit of his own endurance, and the world but little of the true misery of war. He, with his companions, had been at “according to regulation” for the past had huddled together in batches upon the frozen earth, with a shoddy blanket as their only covering. But this was all over for one night more, and again the reveille sounded clear, sharp, and encouraging on the frozen air, and I heard the “turn out,

men; turn out," of Sergeant Carey, as he poked around the half-pitched tents, ever doing the cork-leg business of the company with wonderful elasticity. But my good-natured orderly was not idle all this time. The night before he had, for safety's sake, left some chips just within my tent, and I could see him now vainly endeavouring to light a fire, and occasionally baffled and vexed at his unsuccess. Gusts of wind, dodging around the camp, blew streams of smoke into his well-bronzed face, and more than once made him retreat with weeping eyes, and tempt the poor fellow into a half-choked utterance which he was never taught under the shadow of his native Galtees. Andrew, or "Andy," as his companions used to call him, did however succeed in his task, and soon he left the fire to take care of itself, and *bidon* in hand, ran off for water, which I had the discomfiture of seeing smothered in smoke, by the accidental turning of the villainous log which formed part of the support upon which the *bidon* rested.

"Andy, you have done it this time," said I, as I caught an expression upon his face which might be interpreted to mean "there is no help for spilt milk;" but he applied himself to resume his task, which resulted this time in success, and soon a sickly fire, more smoke than blaze, rewarded his forty minutes' labour.

"Here, try a pull at this," I said, calling him into the tent for a sip at the contents of a brandy-flask which I had accommodatingly at hand.

"That's fine, sir," were the first words he said, when he recovered from the gasping sensation which

novices in the art of drinking from a flask experience. "My throat was like the crust on the inside of a chimney, sir," and away he went to grope amongst tins and little bags for coffee and sugar, for chunks of dirty beef and lard, to prepare the morning meal before we were again *en route*.

But the camp was all alive now, and just as I threw over the blankets, which were barely enough to keep the heat from escaping, Sergeant Carey popped his head in at the door with his usual "good morning, Captain." To me it was always a pleasure to see Sergeant Carey, for his was the very soul of a soldier. It has been my lot to meet many men to whom in periods of trial I surrendered all the friendship of which my nature was capable, but never did I meet the equal of this incomparable man. Gay, indefatigable and obedient, kind to the willing soldier, severe upon the shuffler, the soul of honour, a prince among men, Sergeant Carey has left upon my memory associations of friendship and esteem which death alone can destroy. But here he was, looking as happy as if he had had an hour's rest, or as if his almost empty haversack contained anything but a morsel of the tenderest portion of an aged horse. Amongst the officers of the regiment Sergeant Carey was known as "the sergeant with the grand beard," this same beard being now decorated with icicles as large as the cartridge of a Chassepôt or a Snider.

"Good morning, sergeant," said I, returning the salutation; "is it cold outside?"

"Well, sir," said he, looking down at his singularly frozen beard with an expression of what, I suspect,

had just a little tinge of admiration, "my beard is my thermometer, and I see that it marks six below zero, just," and he stroked the said beard, or rather the icicles which were appended thereto. I always thought there was some peculiar property in Carey's beard, for the particles of frost nestled in it with a tenacity which I had not remarked in the beards of other men.

I thought the contents of my flask might help to thaw the frost from off this remarkable beard, and by the manner Carey accepted the invitation to try its effects, I think he had a somewhat similar belief. Poor fellow, it was like dropping some sulphuric acid upon a block of ice. But it does one some good upon a bitter morning, when hoar frost covers hill and valley, and nestles upon shrub and tree as beautifully delicate as daylight upon the waste of waters.

"Ah, that's the stuff Captain, for a campaign," said the sergeant, when he had paid the penalty of the drain in the shape of a vigorous shiver, such as a spaniel gives when it emerges from a pool. "If they gave us some of that instead of their regulation doses of soup, and nothing in it, twice a day, they might expect a man to march thirty-six hours out of forty."

Just then the regimental call sounded beautifully clear upon the morning air.

"That's for the sergeant-major," I said, as the four notes at the end indicated the rank of the man for whom the bugle sounded. Without a word Carey placed his *kepi* upon his head, left the tent, and I was once more alone. It was still dark, and all around the fizz of damp green wood struggled through volumes

of smoke, from which a soldier shrinks more surely than he does from a vigorous fusilade. The little lamp attached to the tent pole gave sufficient light to enable me to make my easy toilet, which consisted of finding my *kepi*, and buckling on my sword. If we had time, I might indeed indulge in a wash, but that was not always a come-at-able luxury.

"The company is to parade under the command of an officer, Captain, immediately," said Carey, who had just returned. "A man to be shot, sir."

"How is the company to turn out?"

"With arms and ammunition, but without packs, sir."

"All right! muster all the spare men, I'll come myself." And away he rattled, and soon I heard the clash of bayonets as the men unlocked the rifles from the *faisceaux*. It was bitterly cold, and as the men fell in, wet hungry and wretched-looking, more fit for the hospital than the field, more like shadows than like soldiers, wanting in everything save the indomitable spirit of their race, I thought the limit of their endurance had been reached. As I looked along my already diminished company that misty December morning, I could not but think that it is the miseries and not the dangers of a soldier's life, that should form the brightest chapter in his history. But away with reverie, the battalion was ready to march, a word of command, and we rattle along the broken ground, over a ditch or two, out upon the road, and away for the place of execution. Just then I thought I would have time to inquire into the nature of the crime committed by the condemned man. Had he out-

raged person, stolen property, or committed an act of insubordination? Nothing of the kind! He was a boy volunteer, and had simply disposed of some of his kit for a few francs in order to buy food to appease his ravenous appetite. It was said indeed, that it was merely one of his regulation shirts that he had sold, but for the truth of that I could not vouch. But how firmly and coolly he stood amidst the circle of fixed bayonets with which he was surrounded, and even found time to piteously joke that he would have "no knapsack to carry on his next long march." But just at the limit of our camp, where some *chasseurs-à-pied* were shivering on grand-guard, into a field, and there before us we saw the foremost companies of our regiment forming three sides of a square. We soon arrived at the fatal spot, too plainly indicated by a wooden peg driven in the ground.

It was a solemn moment! It was the first military execution that we had seen in France, and the sickly sensation of a new horror crept over us all. But the drums beat and the bugles flourished as the escort arrived, and the youth took his place beside the fatal landmark. He cast one look around, as if searching for some familiar face, and as the sun shed its earliest rays across the belt of landscape, the shadow of their gleam fell lightly upon his calm, still countenance, and then the stillness of death followed. An officer unrolled an ominous-looking sheet of foolscap paper, and there was no sound in heaven or on earth until he read the sentence of the court-martial. All the while the gentle bearing of the youthful soldier influences men's hearts, and makes them

wish strange things indeed. But the crisis soon approached, as the boy-soldier—I cannot say culprit—took off his military jacket, and threw it gently upon the ground, showing the figure of a firmly-set young man. He took his place so near the wooden peg that I thought it would transfix him as he fell, and forgetting for the second that he would fall a corpse, I thought of the pain the contact might cause him. No minister of God attended him to soothe the last moments of his life. He was of another creed and of another country; France was not his home. He took his stand alone, and carried himself with the calmness of a true soldier as his eyes were bandaged. He made no motion, he spoke no word, and obeyed the order to “kneel” more like a Christian martyr than a man on whom the shadow of a crime could rest. The firing party took position ten paces from the fated youth; the officer in command raised his sword for “aim,” lowered it for “fire,” and the fair young Polish soldier was a corpse! But the bugles sound again, and as I turned round to give some orders to the men I detected more than one moist eye, and saw the firmly-set, proud features of Sergeant Carey half averted from my gaze. I remember too many a day after, the daring gallantry of the very men whom I had seen that morning visibly affected by the execution of a boy. I knew these very men to be brave almost to rashness, and even under a murderous fire, cool almost to apathy. Yes, if you want men who will “march to death with military glee,” take the tender-hearted and the gentle, take men who will “not wantonly tread upon a worm.”

It was customary, I heard, for the regiment to march past the executed man in single file, but we were quickly taken away after the sergeant of the firing party had given the *coup de grace*. "Open columns of companies," "*par le flanc droit, droit!*" and the long thin line of red-breeched soldiers was gaily marching back to camp again. Of the dead man we thought no more.

"Cover his bones over with stones,
He is only a soldier whom nobody owns."

His grave was dug, and before the sun had climbed the skirt of timber which lay behind our encampment, he would be buried in the graveyard of the handsome little church that topped the neighbouring hill upon which Bressy was built.

But the day was well advanced—the steel-grey clouds away upon the south-eastern horizon were fringed with streaks of silvery daylight. Magpies, in ominous numbers, perched about the deserted encampment to pick the scanty remnants of the soldiers' spare repast; villagers strolled about the place, and slid along the frozen ground in their canoe-like *sabots*, pitying and praying, but selling their *confitures* all the time. The tents were struck, and *bidons* and *marmites* were everywhere in requisition, and emitted steam from onion soup or garlic. The famished soldiers were vainly trying to "manufacture" a morning meal.

As we drew near the place where our tents had stood, I saw all in preparation for the baggage-waggon. Andy looked radiant at his success in the *cuisine*. Breakfast ready; never mind the sinewy

steak, nor be too fastidious as to its hue, a ravenous appetite makes all the difference in the world.

"Where is Lieutenant M'Alevey, Andy?" I asked; wondering at what delayed my lieutenant from his meal.

"Begorra, I don't know, sir; but I think he is in that direction," replied the mischievous Andy, casting a dangerously-knowing look towards the right of our battalion.

And sure enough, Lieutenant M'Alevey was in *that* direction cracking jokes with a pretty *vivandière*, whom he compelled to laughingly retreat from the storm of his witticisms. But M'Alevey was soon by our side, endeavouring to fix a sinewy steak upon the point of an improvised fork.

We were joined by Mr. Cotter and Dr. Macken, and notwithstanding the toughness of the beef, succeeded in appeasing our voracious appetites with its savoury morsels. Hunger is indeed the best of all sauces. Physiologists say that a variety of food is good for man; if that be so, soldiers in the French army on a campaign are not provided with all that is beneficial or best for their creature comforts. But it is wonderful how even the most fastidious epicures, who perhaps abused innocent *garçons*, and swore at the favourite cooks of their metropolis, how they quickly accommodate themselves to the necessities of the times, and devour horse steak with all the relish of a *gourmand*. Latterly the French military authorities have I believe increased the quantity of rations which was allowed to the French soldiers during the late war. Frenchmen, as a rule, are very poor eaters.

A moderate Irishman would eat a French peasant out of house and home. At best the French troops had not enough to eat; the men were scarcely ever satisfied. As for the Irish soldier, it was starvation—they never had enough. Were it not for the *ordinaire*, to which each man had to contribute three sous every five days, they would not have been able to march. Of this, however, there could not be much to complain of, as all were treated alike. Even the officers had no more than enough, although provided with extra rations. Two lieutenants had the rations of three privates; a captain had the rations of two privates; while *Commandants* had the rations of three privates, and so on in proportion to rank. It is not to be supposed that officers had better appetites than their men, but there are always hangers-on in proportion to the rank, and waste does away with much of the food.

"I don't think the Irish soldier has degenerated in his digestive organs at least," said Dr. Macken, as if he was expressing the opinions which were at that moment coursing through our minds.

"*M. le Medicin, par exemple,*" replied Mr. M'Alevey, as he significantly nodded towards the Doctor, who was engaged devouring an enormous steak from off a tough old charger.

"Well, you know," retorted the Doctor, "it has often been remarked that a people are never cognizant of a decline in their own physical or moral degeneracy. The Romans under Julius Didianus, believed themselves to be the equals of their predecessors under Augustus. Yet," he added, delighted to have mounted

one of his hobby-horses—Ancient History—"of the two periods that of the Imperators was immeasurably the more brilliant. His——"

"Oh, stop, for mercy's sake, Doctor, don't run into the graves of the contemporaries of that time. We'll guess the rest about the golden age of Latin poetry, but in the meantime, allow us to consume our portion of this ancient *cheval* without sprinkling it with the dust of Virgil or of Livy."

"But," remonstrated Dr. Macken, "I was about to draw a comparison unfavourable to your chivalrous self."

"Impossible," replied M'Alevey, "I am the Bayard of modern warfare," just then the "fall in" sounded, we took our place in line and we were off again.

In our turn we led the battalion, and when the *Commandant* placed himself at the head of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* we saw that we were to march by the left, and it was our place to be first away. Back to Bourges again—back over the same road which we had traversed the day before.

The day was fine, and the march uninterrupted with any peculiar incident beyond the one common to all marches—blistered feet, men falling away, some sinking on the road, some groaning with pain, dead and dying horses, broken boots, and hungry men with empty haversacks. Behind us the road was dotted with soldiers who had fallen out of the ranks, and who lay upon heaps of stones or logs of wood—perhaps to die. Gambetta's decrees about courts-martial had been found a failure—they were not practicable. And so the day wore on,—and it was

well into the evening, darkness had settled over the fertile soil, when in the distance the lights from Bourges attracted our attention, looking like fire-flies in the dark, inhospitable night. Another hour brought us to the town, and then we wheeled into a field, through which a small stream coursed merrily along, but where the soil was reeking with wet, and yet where we had to make our bivouac for one night more. My tent, however, was nowhere to be found—there was something wrong with the officers' baggage. Andy, poor fellow, had succumbed to *la misère*, and had fallen out on the march, so Sergeant Carey undertook the task of hunting up the officers' baggage. For fully an hour he floundered about the carts, paying no attention to remonstrances of the sentries, pushing his way where less bold men would hesitate to enter. He was indeed a wonderful man, he could do what he liked in the regiment: his commanding form and vigorous mind overawed the privates and *sous-officiers*, while his magnificent beard and soldierly bearing secured for him the good wishes of every officer in the regiment. Although an humble man, I hope it may be my lot to meet again in life so true a friend, so tender-hearted a man, and so chivalrous a soldier. But it was no use; even Sergeant Carey failed, and we were compelled to huddle into a nook at the suburbs of the town, where we had the comfort of what M'Alevey called "the soft side of a deal board."

CHAPTER XII.

"At Christmas play and make good cheer,
For Christmas comes but once a year."

SHAKESPEARE.

Withered, indeed, was the "garland of war" for France in the last days of December, 1870. Even hope had almost fled. Like Francis I., when he wrote from the Imperial camp, near Pavia, France as one man might say "All is lost, save honour." The garrison in Paris was nearly starving, Le Mans had fallen, Tours had been captured, and Bourges might be occupied any day. In the north, Havre was threatened, and the poor levies of General Gougard in Normandy could make but a sorry resistance against the veteran soldiers of the Red Prince. In the east, Von Werder was pressing the siege of Belfort with persistent, and indeed, gallant valour, which the little garrison as gallantly withstood. In the army the French officers looked upon the war as virtually over, and for a while, I thought that *La Compagnie Irlandaise* would serve its term and return to Ireland without any more service.

Next day we were off for Vierzon. On the way M'Alevey came and walked beside me and said "Captain, do you know it is Christmas Eve," his usually merry-looking face wearing a somewhat sad expression; and indeed so it was, Christmas Eve, 1870.

Christmas, with all its associations of home and happiness! Christmas with its carols and with its comforts, with its reunions and its merry-making, its stories, and its pictures of hope, bright joyous hope, in the happy homes of the dear old land!

Around the hearthstones in holy Ireland the scattered members of many a family were once more seeking the shelter of the parents' wing. How the thoughts flew homeward, homeward to the loved ones whom we might never see again. Even M'Alevey ceased his merriment, and I could trace deep thought upon his face as legibly as if it were written in characters of iron. But how different the Christmas of the soldiers of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*.

This was for us a Christmas of famine and of frost. There are stages of human wretchedness when we think of ourselves alone. There are certain conditions of life which absorb all our thoughts, and make us even more selfish than Nature intended us to be. As we wheeled into the place marked out for our encampment at Vierzon on Christmas Eve, 1870, there were few, if any, of the men of the Irish Company upon whose frame the rigour of the campaign had not made sad havoc. The ground too was as hard as frost ten degrees below zero could make it. Our portion of the encampment was ploughed land, and the little mounds of earth had hardened into iron consistency and rendered walking a task of difficulty and danger. This was the coldest night I ever felt in France. Sergeant Carey, who had served in the Crimea, said that the cold that Christmas Eve at Vierzon was more intense than he ever felt it to be in

Russia. The frosty air almost cut into the system, and the faces of the men became blue and puffy as the warm current of blood became suspended. Around many a half-pitched tent some companion of a frost-bitten soldier might be seen endeavouring to coax vitality back to the feet of his suffering friend, by means of friction. The ground was too hard to permit of the wooden¹ tent-pegs being driven through its granite-like surface. The tents were in no cases well pitched, and the men lay in heaps under the covering, moaning and shivering with pain and cold.

In the Crimea, even during the first winter, it was mostly a sitting campaign, where the troops settled down to their work often without changing their quarters for months. The soldiers always had tents and often stoves. Beds were improvised even in the earliest days of the Crimean war, and clothing was at all times immensely superior to that of the poorly clad Frenchmen of 1870. In France, however, with the thermometer 8 or 10 degrees below zero, it was a running campaign, and there could be little or no provision made for the settled comfort of the troops. It was indeed *la misère*. It was to the men of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* a Christmas full of sorrow; a Christmas of famine, of frost, and of disease. Eight of the men had already succumbed to the chances of war, and although I could not help thinking, as I left the encampment that night to seek shelter in a peasant's cottage, that this Christmas Day would find some of the Irish soldiers frozen to death, I was somewhat disconcerted the following morning when sergeant Terence Byrne came to my quarters and said, "eight

men died from cold, sir, last night," until upon inquiry I found it was eight men in the battalion, not in the Company. I never ascertained whether the figures were an exaggeration or not, although I am sure they were given to Sergeant Byrne as correct.

My new orderly thought the cold severe enough to cause the milch cows to give "ice cream" at their milkings, and save the necessity of manufacturing that article of luxury. But my attendant was pretty comfortable as he busied himself preparing our Christmas breakfast. M'Alevey succeeded in buying a fowl from the proprietors of the cottage, and his orderly was busy dissecting its somewhat aged limbs, and throwing them into a pot full of water that steamed upon the stove. Our host—that is, our host from necessity—was also interested in our comforts, and was busy preparing some onion soup for our morning meal. I often wondered how cheaply the French peasantry live. A few onions roasted with a little grease upon a pan, a crust of toasted bread, and three or four pints of water added, will do a family for a meal, provided they get their *carafon* of wine and a morsel of bread in addition. Our host was very communicative about the late uhlan raid on Vierzon, and took pains to trace, with a wavy motion of his arm, the route of the daring cavalry soldiers of Germany. He showed us some souvenirs of the fight that took place among the vineyards, and just before his door two Uhlans bit the dust, "and here are their caps and sabres," he added, bringing two lancer caps and two cavalry sabres from an adjoining room. "You see," he continued, "where the vines and cereal crops

of last year were sown, just on the margin of that clump of timber; well, a squadron of Uhlans were driven in amongst the vines by a body of *Franc-tireurs* who occupied the wood, and the horses plunged and reared amongst the vine props, until some of them became impaled by the pointed sticks."

Christmas Day passed with the usual routine of camp life. There must have been thousands of men amongst the troops who did not even know that it was the anniversary of the coming of the Messiah. The Legitimists alone are piously inclined.

"It is we, sir," said a bourgeois to me, as we were about striking our tents at Vierzon, on St. Stephen's Day, 1870, "it is we, the Legitimists of France, who are the upholders of moral law throughout the country, and wherever you see the *fleur-de-lis* you may be sure that religious training and the path of virtue follow in its wake."

"By the way," I asked, "what is the origin of the *fleur-de-lis*?"

"Well," replied the bourgeois, "authorities are divided as to whether the celebrated emblem is derived from the white lily of the garden, or from the flag of Iris, which, as generally represented, resembles it both in form and colour."

"But I think I heard that it had something to do with an old custom of the Franks at the proclamation of their kings."

"Yes, it is so supposed," he replied. "In olden times it was the custom to elevate the new king upon a shield or target, and place in his hand a rod or flag in blossom, instead of a sceptre, and from thence the

kings of the first and second race of France are represented with sceptres in their hand like the flag with its flowers, and which flowers became the armorial figures of France."

"The story is quite as absurd as your other stories of kingly virtues and Divine right," said a bloused peasant who stood by the side of the bourgeois. "I suppose you'll expect us to believe that this *fleur-de-lis* of yours came down from heaven, or that an angel gave it to King Clovis at his baptism, and the like—bosh!" he added, tossing his head contemptuously aside, "Frenchmen have outlived such rubbish, and the least that is said of legitimate virtue and Divine right the better."

Just then a corps of *Franc-tireurs* passed by, their theatrical uniform and easy carriage giving them the appearance of being, in every sense, the class of soldiers their name implied.

"A fine lot of fellows," said Dr. Macken, who came and stood beside me. "Prussia should be the last nation on the face of the earth to object to the establishment of Free Corps in any country. The history of 1806 should be enough to make every man in Prussia denounce the severity with which these men are being treated by the German troops. Do you remember, Captain," continued Dr. Macken, "that it was owing to the want of irregular battalions that Prussia collapsed in 1806, while the authorities, both civil and military, did all they could to make, not free shooters, but assassins of their countrymen?"

"I forget my Alison," I replied, "but would like to hear the circumstances from you."

"Oh, I don't remember much," said the Doctor, "but I believe it is a fact that in 1807 Prussia attempted to organize bands of assassins to destroy the French, and that one of the distinctive features of those bands was that they wore no uniform of any kind, so that they might pass unknown after they had accomplished their foul purpose."

"But the French Government has acted wisely in ordering that all bands of *Franc-tireurs* shall be attached to an Army Corps on active service, and they thus obtain the protection of regular troops," said Mr. Cotter, who joined us in our conversation.

But the free-shooters passed along, and orders came for the brigade to march into the town, where the troops were to be billeted. It was joyous news for the men of the *Régiment Etranger*; at last they were to have the comfort of a few days' repose. The weather too cleared up; the air, although intensely cold, became crisp and dry, and the troops enjoyed their straw beds, and a comparative abundance of food with epicurean relish.

In the meantime the Germans were establishing successive military lines across the country. With the exception of Paris, Havre and a few places in Normandy and Picardy, the entire country north of the Loire was in their hands. On the 27th of December, Mount Avron, an outwork constructed by the French on the north side of Paris, was successfully bombarded by the enemy, who occupied the fort the following day, and in a few days following they silenced Forts Rosny, Noisy and Nogent, the advanced works of the French on their north-

eastern front. Everything pointed to a speedy termination of the war. Hitherto it was our fortune, or misfortune, to be away from the scene of the heavy fighting, one little brush alone standing to the credit of our account. At Caen we were delayed, expecting recruits who never arrived, else we should have participated in the fighting in and around Orleans. At Bourges I had to go to the general in command, and request to be sent to the front. Five days elapsed—nothing was done; and during these five days Orleans was recaptured, and those hopeful combats of Chively and Artiny were fought. Our regiment participated in all those fights. Then when we joined our regiment, day by day we expected to be attacked in force by the army of Prince Frederick-Charles. Bourges lay right before him; as a strategic position, he should attack the place if he intended to advance. Bourbaki had taken the greater portion of the army to the east, fully expecting that our corps would have the task of defending Bourges against the hitherto successful prince. But Frederick-Charles advanced no farther than Vierzon, leaving us in possession of all the numerous roads leading from Bourges to the south, and of the railway communications along the Loire east and west. But it was the fortune of war, and yet it was more painful to see the company decimated by hard marching, by famine and by frost, than by the bullets or bayonets of the enemy. But we had all a joyous time at Vierzon, except, indeed, when our turn for grand guard left us exposed to the piercing weather. All this, however, made

the men experienced in their work, and they soon learned the mysteries of erecting *gourbies* and of providing shelter in the most approved fashion. Yet it was cold, harsh, trying work. In summer, indeed, it would have been enjoyable—the necessity of being on the *qui vive* furnishing sufficient excitement to cause every man to feel an interest in his surroundings. And then the patrols in the early grey of the morning, when at any moment from thicket, bush, or sheltered timber, a volley might be thrown upon the party, or a charge of Uhlans cause them to form a little square to resist the desperate onslaught. Yes, grand guard is pleasant enough in summer, but it is quite another thing with a thermometer fifteen degrees below zero—with hunger and hardship in full possession of the vital powers of men who are expected to be ever active and vigilant. On grand guard, I generally contrived to make room for the sergeants, on the main post, inside the little *gourbie* which was erected for the officers, when at all practicable,—and Carey, Donnellan, the two Byrnes, and Henry M'Crossin, often partook of the shelter of the interwoven branches: Donnellan was a magnificent specimen of a man. He was about eight-and-twenty years of age, six feet two high, and with shoulders broad enough to be the envy of a prize-fighter. He was too a singularly handsome man, and the grace and ease of his every movement gave him an impressive manner. Educated for the English army, he served many years in the 4th West India Regiment, and was beloved by every officer in his corps. When the West India regiments were

disbanded, Donnellan was placed on half-pay, and soon after commuted, and then ultimately went to France and enlisted in the ranks of the *Régiment Etranger*. He was in every sense a noble specimen of an Irish soldier. His conduct at the battle of Orleans brought him under the notice of his *Commandant*, and he would have received a commission for his gallantry, but his knowledge of the French language was too limited. His bravery was the theme of many a tongue, but with that native modesty, however, which is so charming in the real soldier, he was dumb upon his own merits, and it was only in action that that gentleman soldier showed all the cool gallantry of his race.

"At Orleans, *Capitaine*," said his ex-*Commandant* to me, "Donnellan behaved with much bravery. He was one of the last to retire across the bridge, and even knelt down in front of all our men to take deliberate aim at the advancing enemy. There was nothing of rashness, but there was everything of cool daring, in his conduct, and I hope to see the Cross of the Legion of Honour decorate his chivalrous breast before many days." But famine and fatigue had done their work upon his frame, and his attenuated figure attested the hardships which he had endured,—and yet he was uncomplaining, doing his duty to the letter, and showing a brilliant example of how a delicately-reared gentleman can endure all the privations of a hard campaign. I remember one morning, long before dawn, taking Donnellan, four file of men and a corporal, out on patrol. We marched fully a mile beyond the outer limits of our grand

guard, and entered a country somewhat undulating and dotted with clumps of trees. The air was cold, snow covered the route, and now and again we halted and tried to detect some sound that might indicate the presence of the enemy, whom we knew to be close at hand. We had entered a narrow defile, skirted on either side by a thick-set hedge, while the trees covered the ground which rose on each side of the road to a considerable altitude. It was just such a place as would induce an enemy to lie in wait for their foes. The corporal and two men marched in front, while Donnellan and I with the remainder were about fifty yards behind. Suddenly the little advance guard halted, and over the snow-beaten route we could just trace their figures sliding off into the ditch beside the road. There was something in the wind, and the corporal in advance, with laudable foresight, made no indication of his suspicion, knowing that we could see his movements.

"There is something up, Donnellan," I said, "move over under the ditch—silence—hush;" and just then a low whistle sounded away over our heads, and appeared to come from the airy eminence which nearly overhung the road. The whistle was scarcely audible, and were it not for the rarified state of the atmosphere, would have been altogether unheard, and yet I was certain it could not have been more than two hundred or three hundred yards from where we were.

"Did you hear that, Donnellan," I said in a whisper, as the men crouched low under the ditch, "move the *garde mobile* of your rifles very gently, don't make a

noise or they may hear the click, steady, hush!" and the men had put a cartridge into the breech of their rifles with as little noise as it was possible to make.

"There is a valuable invention open to some one of mechanical brains, Captain," said Donnellan, "if they can make a rifle come to full cock, without causing that tell-tale 'click.'"

"Yes, there is; but here, Donnellan, take one of the men, and move quietly to where the corporal is, and see what is the matter," and soon I saw the party return along the bush, moving as stealthily as a cat about to pounce upon its prey. Just then the low, guarded whistle, again sounded upon our ears. Our position was anything but a comfortable one; a mile from camp, in a narrow defile which might be occupied by the enemy, who were at that moment, perhaps, surrounding us. I gave the order to retire, keeping close under the thick-set bush, and almost hugging its thorny branches, as we stole under its welcome shelter. Every step was taken with caution, and just as we were about to pass into the open country beyond, a shot from a rifle woke the stillness of the morning with its ominous sound. In an instant my little command were upon their knees, and not till then did I order to "fix bayonets," expecting every moment to hear the rush of cavalry, or the tramp of infantry, in front or beside us. We were well sheltered in our rear, and could inflict some punishment upon an enemy advancing along the open road. Then another shot came in our immediate front, and another, and then a small volley hissed through the trees around us, and the firing became

pretty general all along our entire line. At that moment we thought that a portion of our line had been attacked, and that the enemy was between us and our post. To venture into the open road might expose us to the enemy, and to remain where we were until daylight might lead to our capture.

"I think we had better venture to rejoin the camp, Donnellan," I said in a whisper to my sergeant, who was as cool and as calm as if we were about to take a promenade along some sequestered lane in his native county—Galway. "Put the men out in single file, about six yards between each man, and we will trust to chance and move on rapidly for our post." If the enemy occupied the woods around us, the moment we stepped from out the friendly shelter of the hedge a volley was certain to be thrown upon us, and the whistle which we all heard, left little doubt upon our minds that such was the case. But unless we got away before daylight our fate was sealed, and I determined to make the venture.

I shall never forget how coolly Sergeant Donnellan stepped out upon the road, his rifle at full cock, and his finger upon the trigger. There was not the shadow of emotion visible in his countenance, which I could plainly see as I turned round and looked into his handsome face. Any second himself or his companions might be sent to eternity, and that too, under circumstances, which lack all that soul inspiring pomp and circumstance which make men risk life for military fame. It is at such times that the true soldier is tried. The men, too, behaved with a coolness which did them infinite credit. But on we pressed, peering

into the darkness, listening for the least audible sound, when suddenly from out the gloom the joyous challenge "*Qui vive*," sounded upon our ears.

"France," I replied, as I heard a dozen hammers placed on full cock, and saw dark blotches, which I took for men, lining the road before me.

"Advance and give the *ralliement*," and then Sergeant Donnellan went in front and over the pointed bayonets of a dozen Frenchmen, he gave the counter-sign for the night, and then a hurried conversation took place between myself and the lieutenant in command of the party. We were still nearly a mile from camp; dawn was just breaking; there was a little cover on the spot; I took charge of the squad, and remained there until daylight had fairly set in, and no enemy in view. The cause of the firing I never heard explained, but always suspected that some *Franc-tireurs* in their eagerness for spoil, mistook us for Germans, never waited to challenge, and then when they had discovered their mistake, made off as best they could. We were soon scrambling through the vines before our *petite-postes*, and stumbled across Sergeant Terence Byrne, whose little command I in vain attempted to surprise. The hardships of the campaign had told with much effect upon the frame of poor Terence Byrne. His life, too, had been somewhat of an eventful one. He had been a Fenian, and was tried and convicted for complicity with that movement. It was he who gave that well-known rebuke to Judge Keogh, who with unquestionable bad taste, attempted to make the prisoner's fate more bitter than it was, by calling him a "low" conspirator.

"Not low, my lord, but humble," was the quiet rejoinder, and a truer word never escaped the lips of a man. Terence Byrne was humble, but he was as much incapable of "lowness" as was his lordly censor. In *La Compagnie Irlandaise* there were several well-known Fenians, and their general conduct, their love of order, their high sense of duty, their unfaltering fidelity, their steady zeal and their chivalrous courage, won from me, and every officer of the battalion, the highest praise. Fate, in its unwavering course, ordained that two, at least, of those men should not die a soldier's death, and Sergeants Carey and Byrne returned after the war to sleep in Glasnevin; but the memory of their unassuming conduct, of their indefatigable zeal, and of their splendid courage, has left a retrospective shadow of generous recollection ever present with their names. Men can disagree with those who join such conspiracies, but yet they can do simple justice to their memories.

CHAPTER XIII.

"For I am as a weed

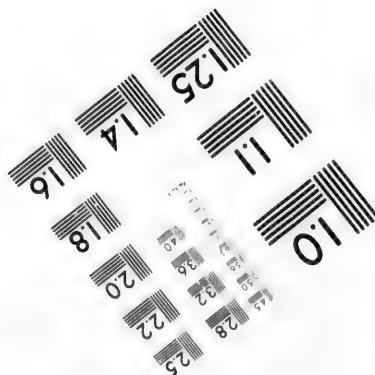
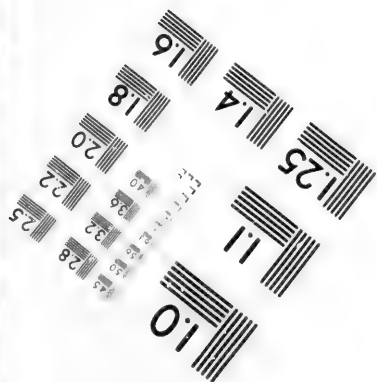
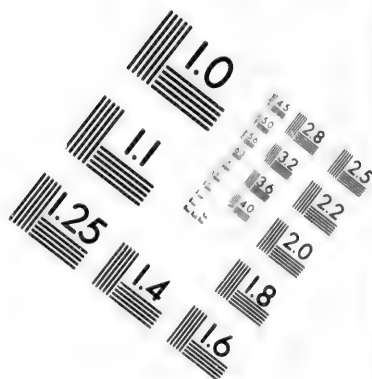
Flung from the rock on Ocean's foam to sail,

Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail."

SHAKESPEARE.

We loitered at Vierzon until the 4th of January. We had our grand guards to mount, our reconnoitring to perform, and our picquet duty to do. The weather, however, became fine, and duty became a pleasure. The Uhlans of Prince Frederick-Charles were feeling

their way around our position, and the necessity of being constantly on the *qui vive* made outpost duty a desirable pastime. There is nothing in warfare so pleasant as skirmishing. Admitting that Hobbes was right, and that "every creature lives in a state of war by nature," and that man merely tones the desire for blood into what is called "civilized warfare," there is a pardonable pride in dodging from bush to brake, and picking off one's enemies at a respectable distance. I know of nothing so pleasant, if indeed there be anything pleasant in war, unless it be a skirmish. You are posted behind a rock, or you are sheltered under a slight inequality in the ground, an occasional bullet whistles past your head, and then you venture to peep out and send an occasional bullet in reply, and if your man is tumbled, the pleasure is all the keener. Nay, you feel a sense of joy when the poor wretch throws up his arms, and you are relieved from watching the place that sheltered him. In after life you may now and again think over some widowed home, where the name of "father" is murmured by prattling babes, whom your handiwork has left upon the cold charity of the world; or your fancy may occasionally run riot with your feelings, as you picture a sorrowful mother, weeping in agonized suspense for the boy that your hand has sent to his last account. But at the time, just when you watch the effect of your shot, and see the successful result, and perhaps hear the dying shout of the stricken man, there is a positive feeling of satisfaction takes possession of your senses. In fact a man never feels himself a true soldier until he has



Photographic Sciences Corporation

**23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503**

28
25
22
20
18

10

either killed or maimed an enemy, or until he believes he may have done so. Men go into a skirmish without much misgiving as to the issue, while they experience the excitement of a combat, without the broader phases of its dangers. But in great battles it is different; men enter them with dread, and this latter feeling, for a while at least, sickens the heart, and destroys the sense of pleasure, which the probability of pulling through with a whole skin undoubtedly gives the soldier marching into action. About Vierzon however, we had a pleasant time of it, and it was with some regret we left it to return to Bourges. We had one more night in Mehun, *en route*, but it was merely a rest, for at 3 a.m. we were again away for Bourges, which we reached early on the morning of the 6th of January. I had heard at Mehun, that we were to follow the army of Bourbaki, and we speculated in joyous anticipation of the high handed way we would pay those lordly Germans back in their own coin, if we succeeded in carrying the war into Baden-Baden. Some of the officers were particularly sanguine, and I well remember Ceresole coming to me, as we halted outside Bourges, and saying:

"Your lieutenant will have an opportunity of flirting with German frauleins before the month is over, perhaps he would prefer them to French society."

"*Jamais, jamais,*" replied M'Alevey with well affected indignation, while he attempted to look as wise as Solon. I suspect, however, that just then M'Alevey did speculate upon the theme, and I

thought that I detected a merry twinkle in his eye, which would find expression in spite of all his efforts to look wise and indifferent.

But we passed a miserable day and night. The men pitched their tents upon a hill outside the town, and between some field-works which had been constructed to protect the place. It was as bad as Mehun; mud, mud everywhere. Even the wood could not be made to burn, and it fizzed and smoked, but would not kindle. The officers were allowed to go to the town, and one and all eagerly availed themselves of the permission. So we floundered our way to Bourges, and were soon sheltered beneath a comfortable *auberge*, which was already crowded by our comrades. A cup of coffee was quickly swallowed to the dregs, and just as I was about pouring some brandy into a small glass that was placed before me, some one placed his hand upon my shoulder, and in a somewhat familiar tone said, "Ah, we meet again, Captain."

I looked up, and there stood M'Iver, his arm in a sling, and his face ashy pale. He was dressed in the uniform of a colonel of staff, and his breast was covered with decorations. He extended his only serviceable hand, which I cordially shook, and after pressing him to refreshments, I heard the main features of his career since I had seen him in Caen. But he was silent in reference to himself. His arm and hand in splinters was proof enough that he had been hit somewhere, but he just mentioned the fact, no more.

"Oh, its nothing," he said, moving his arm slightly,

"a ball shattered the bone a little, struck in at the elbow and came out at the wrist. I got it in a little affair near Havre. There is nothing broken, and I expect I shall be all right in a few weeks."

M'Iver was made a welcome guest at our quarters, and he sat with us around the fire telling his adventures, and we telling ours. There was some mystery about his escape from death, to which he once alluded, and he was somewhat reticent upon the subject when M'Alevey reminded him of what he had told us in Caen. All he would now tell us was that he was taken prisoner, condemned to be shot, but that owing to his being high up in the Masonic order he escaped. I was somewhat curious to know more of his history, but he was not loquacious, and it was only at times he would venture to allude to the scenes through which he had passed. He had a scar upon his face, and guessing that he received it in some stirring affair, I asked him if my suspicions were correct.

"Yes," he answered, "I received that in India. Near Delhi my troop was ordered to charge some Sepoys, and in the tussel a Pandey gave me the scar you see, with the slash of his sabre. I however succeeded in passing my weapon into his body, when the fellow caught the blade in his hand and held my sabre in the wound, at the same time spitting in my face, and calling me 'a dog of a European.'"

M'Iver was reticent just then, and he told us no more about it.

We had a miserable night of it at Bourges. The rain fell in torrents, the mud was ankle-deep, the men were wet, cold, and hungry, and yet there was

nothing for it but to lie down and dose the time away. The morning of the 7th was just the same—rain, rain, all day long. The troops were meanwhile being hurried away by rail, and the Irish Company had to bide its time. From dawn to dark we stood under the downpour, and the water was oozing out of our boots, before it came to our turn to embark. The fires would not light, and even the luxury of a cup of coffee could not be provided. The *ordinaire*, indeed, supplied the men with a glass of brandy each, which, with a bit of dry bread or biscuit, was all they had for thirty-six hours. Wet, cold, with chattering teeth, and hunger gnawing with fatal effect at the vital energies of the men, we at last took the train at 10 p.m. on the 7th of January, and crowded into the compartments with steaming clothes, empty haversacks, and broken spirits. We were away for the east—away to where we dreamed of brilliant exploits, and perhaps retrieved fortunes for poor France. Away through Nevers, where we once more strike the Loire, and where the hedgerows around the country take the thoughts back to the domestic scenery of holy Ireland. On through Autun, with its classic associations, and where, at one time, the most illustrious youth of Gaul were educated. Here I had an opportunity of seeing a perfect mine of Roman antiquities, the noble amphitheatre, the beautiful Roman gates, with their posterns and double arches below for carriage-ways, while above the arcades of open arches, ornamented with pilasters, form a gallery over the doorway leading to the round towers which at one time flanked the walls; and then on still, until Chagny is reached, and the great mines

and iron basins of Creuzot-Epinac, &c., are close at hand.

At Chagny we had some days' delay, but were still confined to the carriages. The road was blocked with troops, and we could not get on. The relaxation of the muscular action, consequent upon continued rest, caused the men's feet to swell alarmingly. There was not a man in the company whose feet was not bursting through the frail covering called "shoes." Every soldier in *La Compagnie Irlandaise* was compelled to cut his shoes, in order to give freedom to his cramped feet. Sores were caused in consequence of the edges of the cut portion of the shoe rubbing against the foot, and festered feet, bloated from the want of exercise, afflicted every one of the men. But there was no help for it, we should be away again; away through Dijon, Dôle, Besançon, Baume-les-Dames, and on through the beautiful valleys of the Vosges, where the overhanging mountains lean with threatening grace over the road underneath. But on still, and then our destination—Clarval—was reached. The houses were somewhat Swiss in their construction, and oil lamps were suspended on ropes, which stretched from house to house across the narrow streets. It was 8 p.m., and we wheeled into a field; the men lit fires to cook their food, while we prepared to be again away for the front at midnight.

"Well, Captain," said Dr. Macken, as we sat around the bivouac, the light from the fire throwing a lurid gleam upon the features of M'Alevey and Cotter, who were engaged consuming some tough beefsteak, "Well, Captain, we shall soon be into it again; I

hear we are to march for Montbelliard at 12 o'clock to-night, and that we are sure to relieve Belfort, and then carry the war into Germany. But, Mac, what's the matter with you, old boy?" continued the Doctor, seeing M'Alevey somewhat dull.

"Well, Doctor, I was just thinking of a circumstance that happened in 1863, when I was in Mexico, and when I lost the dearest of my comrades; and who knows," he continued, "whether we four shall ever see another night together in this world?"

"Oh, never mind the future, but tell us about the past—this comrade of yours; who was he, and where and how did it all occur?"

"Oh, I'll tell you some other time," said M'Alevey, sipping his coffee, and carefully wiping all traces of it from his ever-neat moustaches.

"Tell us, Mac; perhaps your prediction may be fulfilled, and you may not have an opportunity again—so out with it," replied the Doctor, as he laid his tin cup upon a log of wood, lit a cigar, and composed himself in anticipation of M'Alevey's story.

"Well, I'll tell you," said M'Alevey, "just hand me a cigar, Doctor—thanks; a match—thanks, *encore*. Now listen, and I pledge you my word every syllable of what I am going to tell you is true,—and if you take the trouble of consulting the regimental book for the first quarter of 1863, you will find it recorded therein.

"On the 9th of February, 1863, the 2nd *Régiment Etranger* embarked on board the *Wagram* man-of-war at Mers-el-Kiber for Mexico. The inhabitants of Oran turned out *en masse* to see the troops embark—

not that the sight was in any way novel to the good people of Oran, for it was the third time in less than ten years they had seen the same regiment embarking at the same place for the Crimean and Italian campaigns. There were no loud hurrahs or *vivas*, either by the troops or people, but there was a good deal of fervent hand-shaking, and kissing and sobbing between the young fellows of the regiment and the mesdemoiselles and señoritas, just by way of showing that no ill feeling existed. At 6 o'clock p.m. the *St. Louis* and *Wagram* got under weigh, and next day we passed close under the frowning guns of Gibraltar.

"Of the voyage out I need say nothing, except that we touched at Madeira and Martinique. Never can I forget the beauty of the scene which met my view when I went on deck one morning, and found the ship at anchor in the beautiful harbour of Funchal. The sun had just risen, and shed a flood of golden light on the gentle hills and gardens with which the town is surrounded. Not a breath disturbed the deep calm of the broad Atlantic, which lay like a huge mirror beneath our ship. Not a cloud o'ercast the beauty of the sky. Earth, ocean, sky—all three seemed wedded in one eternal bond of love, peace, and beauty. On a black, rocky precipice, surrounded by the ocean, stood Château Loo, with its grim old cannon scowling envy, as it were, at the natural beauties of the place. It looked that morning, I thought, like some monster that had suddenly risen from his ocean cave, and forgot to return; or like some hideous goblin that had unexpectedly burst in on a scene of fairy enchantment. At noon I was granted permission to go on

shore. The town, when you enter it, is not very handsome; indeed the only thing in it worth seeing is the Franciscan Convent, which contains a chamber, the walls and ceiling of which are covered with human skulls and thigh bones, the relics of holy men who have died on the island. To Madeira the climate is everything; the icy cold of winter and the scorching heat of summer are here unknown, for spring and autumn reign continually, and produce fruits and flowers throughout the year. The hedges are formed of myrtle, rose, jasmine, and honeysuckle, while the most delicate flowers which are nursed in our green houses at home grow here in wild abundance.

"About the 10th of April, we dropped anchor under the guns of St. Juan d'Ulloa, and for the first time cast eyes on Vera Cruz, Mexico, and in my opinion a more God-forsaken looking place there is not in the world. The town is built on an arid plain, and the whole coast as far as the eye can see, presents nothing but barren sand hills to the view, with here and there a patch of grovelling brushwood, that but helps to make sterility conspicuous. For in the distance behind the town rises the mighty Mount Orizaba, with its crown of eternal snow. At a short distance from our ship lay a small island of white sand, utterly devoid of vegetation. It seemed a complete forest of wooden crosses; when I enquired as to the meaning of these crosses, I was told that the place was used as a cemetery for sailors who died of yellow fever; while to crown the misery and desolation that seemed everywhere to reign, the bay and beach was strewn with the hulls and masts of seventeen large ships, that had been wrecked a year

or two previous, during a gale from the north. On the morning of the 11th, the regiment disembarked, and at evening parade the colonel informed us in a brilliant speech, that the regiment would have the honour of protecting the communications and escorting convoys between Puebla and Vera Cruz. Now of all the fatiguing and disagreeable duties which a soldier has to perform in campaign, that of escorting convoys of war material and provisions, is by far the most disagreeable and fatiguing. If the roads are good and dry, you are smothered with dust, and the pace is killing; if they are bad and wet, you are bespattered with mud and filth, and owing to the slow pace, will perhaps be marching half the night. To this hour I shudder, when I think of the misery and hardships I suffered in La Terre Chaude. Every day there was a down-pour of rain, and such rain, you would think the very sluices of the heavens had been opened. Suddenly the rain would cease, and then the sun would shine out with such rays of boiling heat, that I have more than once seen soldiers drop dead by the side of the waggons. In Africa we were burnt brown, roasted if you will, but it was a dry, healthy heat. In La Terre Chaude, we were boiled, steamed as it were, in a pestilential vapour. The earth is literally teeming with insect life, and night and day there is a continual buzz, and whistling that almost drives you mad; lift the first stone you see on the wayside and you will find beneath it either scorpions, or enormous centipedes, or coral snakes. At night the air swarms with fire-flies and mosquitoes; sleep you cannot, you dose away the night in a broken nightmare, and when the first streak of

dawn appears, you are awakened with screaming and yelling, as if ten thousand devils had broken into the camp; snatching your gun you hurry out of your tent, and find the camp surrounded by a cloud of green parrots, that shout and scream the louder, when they see your red cap and breeches. But to my story. The first battalion to which I belonged, was echeloned in detachments of two and three companies, on the road between Vera Cruz, and Chicehuite. Now you must not imagine that Chicehuite is either a town or a village, for there is not a human habitation within many miles of it. It is a huge mountain, at the base of which there runs a rapid river, and over which the road to Mexico passes. In a military point of view the position was a very important one, and was strongly guarded. I was lying in my tent one evening in May, with my hands rolled in a handkerchief, and smoking like a steam engine to keep the mosquitoes from my face, when my friend Sergeant Morzikie entered. He was about twenty years of age, tall, well built, and considered the handsomest man in the regiment.

"Where the deuce are you going so late?" said I to him, for he was in marching costume.

"Just come to say good-bye, Mac, the mail has arrived at Vera Cruz with important despatches for headquarters, and my company is going to meet it, as large bands of guerillas have been seen lately near Cameron. So good-bye, old fellow," said he, shaking me warmly by the hand, and turning, he hurried rapidly down the mountain.

"That was the last time I ever saw my friend alive;

—for two years we had lived in the closest friendship, and during all that time he had been my *camarade de camarades*. By birth he was a Pole, and had been educated for the Church, but preferring the more active life of a soldier, had joined the Legion to try and win his baton. Next evening about the same hour that I had bid my friend farewell, I was half way up the mountain, parrot shooting, and had just sat down to rest myself and enjoy the fine view of the country which the place commanded, when suddenly I heard the clear sharp note of the trumpet sounding the *générale*. Starting to my feet, I listened with breathless attention, and in a moment after, the chorus was taken up by a dozen others, so that the entire mountain echoed with the alarming cry. Seizing my gun I ran furiously down the mountain, and found the troops already under arms. I had barely joined my company when the trumpets sounded the regimental march, and off we went, whither I did not yet know. As soon as we were fairly started, I turned to the person next me and asked the cause of alarm. By him I was informed that the company that had set out the night before to meet the mail, had been surrounded at Cameron by guerillas, and had been engaged all day.

“‘God grant,’ said I, that we may not be too late to assist the poor fellows,’ and a shudder passed through my body when I thought of my friend Morzikie. The distance from Chiechuite to Cameron is thirty-five English miles. We marched all night, and at four o’clock in the morning halted and made coffee, and when the sun had well risen, started once more

on our weary march. Within a mile of Cameron we came on the first token of the tragedy that had recently taken place. Seated under a tree, stark naked, and almost dead with loss of blood and thirst, we found the drummer of the unfortunate company; a bullet had gone through his chest and out at his back, and three of his fingers had been chopped off by a sabre cut. A little brandy was given to him, the doctor hastily dressed his wounds, and one or two soldiers unpacked their sacks and gave him the clothing he so much required. When he had recovered sufficient strength, he told us his company had been attacked about four in the morning in the plain of Palo Verde by about one thousand guerillas, the greater part of whom were mounted. 'The company,' said he, 'immediately formed square, and then we fired volley after volley into their ranks, almost at close quarters; seeing they could not force our ranks, they retired, and called on us to surrender, but Captain D'Anjou sternly refused. We then retreated on Cameron, fighting our way foot by foot. During the retreat we lost about twenty men, and the lieutenant and sub-lieutenant were both killed. We reached Cameron about eight o'clock, and barricaded the doors and windows of the house we occupied; we fought till dark, fought till there was not a single cartridge left even in the pouches of the dead men. The Mexicans then burst into the house, and I remember nothing more till I awoke this morning and found myself naked lying among the other dead men.'

"Such was the story told us by the poor drummer,

and alas! it was too true. Leaving him with the doctor and a guard, the rest of the troops pushed on to Cameron. There I saw such a sight as I pray God I may never witness again. Sixty-two of our dead *compagnons d'armes* had been collected by the guerillas and placed in a deep straight fosse by the side of the road. Shoulder to shoulder in the ranks of death, and divested of every article of clothing, lay the brave fellows—every man of whom I knew personally. A bright warm sun was shining on their ghastly features and cold stiff forms; most of them wore an expression of pain, and some of them had their arms extended and their hands tightly clenched in a fighting posture.

“The company, when it left Chicehuite, consisted of eighty-eight men all told; of the entire number only five were left living at Cameron, of whom the drummer was one—the other four were taken prisoners and conducted to Jalapa, where they were well treated, and were afterwards exchanged for Mexican prisoners. More than 300 guerillas bit the dust at Cameron. When we left Chicehuite we brought but one day's rations with us, and were compelled to return at night without exchanging a shot with the assassins who had slaughtered our comrades. We could not even perform the sad office of interment, as we had neither pick nor spade. When we returned to Cameron two days afterwards to bury the dead, the sight which met my view filled me with horror. Owing to the great heat, decomposition had set in, and their bodies were swollen to an enormous size. Already had those horrid birds, the zopilotes, com-

menced to prey on their naked bodies. But I must draw a veil over the disgusting scene. Since then I have stepped over the dead and dying on many a battle-field, and have seen men shoot one another down amid the horrid din of artillery, but the sight was not half so horrible or terrifying as the silent dead of Cameron. I must not conclude without informing you that the drummer lived, notwithstanding the serious nature of his wounds, and that he received the Cross of the Legion of Honour. The regiment was also publicly thanked in the General Orders for the bravery displayed by this company, and a short time afterwards we left the 'hot earth' for the siege of Puebla."

"But did you distinguish your friend, the sergeant, amongst the number of the dead at Cameron?" asked the Doctor, when M'Alevey had finished his story.

"Oh, yes; but cease—ask me no more. The recollection of his bloated, distorted features, clenched hands, vividly distended eyes, with the flesh torn from the bones by the zopilotes, has left upon my mind a picture I cannot contemplate without a shudder. But," he added, starting to his feet and buckling on his sword-belt, which he had unloosened, "there goes the 'march' of the regiment; we are off again."

It was just midnight when we commenced to move away, and for seven hours we floundered on in the dark, through mud and snow; on through the cold, damp, dark night we kept at it until seven the following morning.

It was just daybreak. We had halted beside a

canal that skirted the beautiful valley of the Doubs. Away on the eastern horizon a bud of light swelled upwards and tinged with grey the nimbus clouds of night. Those particles of dust-clouds, heated by contact with our atmosphere, and known as "St. Laurence's tears," occasionally darted across the heavens, like rockets through a storm-cloud. The wind ate through the miserable clothing of the men, who had thrown themselves, shuddering, upon the snow-beaten route, and tried to catch a few moments of repose. The Doubs came bubbling down as if the spirits of the stream were murmuring their thanksgiving at having escaped the frozen grasp of King Frost. The tall ranges of the Vosges reared their venerable heads high into the upper strata of the air, as if observing all that passed below. Cascades tripped adown the steep sides of the hills and rushed madly into the river, and a miniature fall close by made mimic thunder in our ears. The great poplars that lined the road threw shadowy bars across our path, like spectral forms across the valley of death. The snow was falling in downy flakes, and hardened into patches of icy crystals upon the wearied troops, who lay almost unconscious and indifferent to everything save honour. We had now been about seven hours on foot—an all night march—and as I sat upon a log of wood that lay beside the road, I heard a sound, distant, but yet a sound, of cannon, booming upon the morning air. The work had begun for the day, and if our troops did not gain ground before the sun had set behind the southwestern hills, *La Compagnie Irlandaise* would be in action. Who knew but a brilliant revenge awaited the

army of Bourbaki? Who knew but we might form part of the "Army of Liberation?" We had heard good news at Clarval. We had not heard of the occupation of Le Mans by the Germans on the 12th inst., but we had heard that the left wing of the army under Bourbaki in person had carried Villersexel on the 9th, and that General Werder was hemmed in between the two wings of the *Armée de l'Est*. We had heard, too, that we had been running the enemy for three days, and everywhere along our route there was evidence to show that the Germans were in retreat before us. But there it sounded again, sure enough the ball had begun, and the booming increased, as dawn merged into daylight, and we were again *en route*, this time really for the front.

"Did you hear that, captain?" said M'Alevey at my side, as we trudged along, a few minutes afterwards, haggard and hungry, "There it is again;—

"It is, it is the cannon's opening roar,"

and the ever-joyous lieutenant affected an attitude suggestive of the drama.

"*La musique de la guerre*," said one of the captains of the regiment—Caton—who had fallen out, and was now passing on to his company in front. "Your Irish boys will soon be into it again."

"Well, it is all *comme à la guerre*," I answered.

"Yes, but this is the last move on the board," said Captain Caton, somewhat depressingly, while his hand instinctively played with his revolver; "if this fails the game is up; but the fire is growing hot," he added, as the booming increased until the cannonade blazed away in almost continuous discharges.

The men moved on as best they could. In some instances they cut out that portion of the uppers of their shoes that rubbed against the excoriation of the sores on their feet, and then, exposed to the cold, the sores enlarged, and became offensive to the smell. Others boldly threw away the wretched excuses for shoes, and tramped barefooted and bleeding over the beaten track. A few cut up their cotton gaiters and lapped their feet in the folds, much as a surgeon bandages up a splintered arm. It was painful to watch the efforts made at shuffling over the ground, for walk the troops could not, except indeed, a few who had by some means contrived to have a pair of shoes that were not of regulation pattern. The clothing also, was hanging in tattered patches from the persons of the men. For four months they had lain night and day in the one suit of clothes, and the cleanest *sous-officier* in the regiment could not have been free from loathsome vermin. But "in the deepest depth there is a lower still." The worst had not come yet! Had it not been that we were going to the front, hundreds of men of the *Régiment Etranger* would have lain down beside the road—perhaps to die. But the music of war stirred the blood of all. Even the weakly pressed onward then, and the men of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, who, an hour before, were faint almost to death, stepped out with a vigour that showed there was mettle in them all. Not that men are anxious to court danger, but they are anxious to see it. The feeling a man has going into action is not easily defined. It is a mixed feeling of dread and duty; but it is duty first, and dread afterwards. Every man is

•

by nature a coward. The fear of death is natural to all men. The man who says "I fear not" is a hypocrite, a coward, or a fool. It is not courage, but a high sense of honour that makes good soldiers. Physically, one man may be braver than another man, but it is a deep sense of responsibility and keenness of honour that keeps him longest at a post of danger. The man who "fears not death" is incapable of command, and can never be anything more than a butcher in warfare. There is nothing in nature more contemptible than a man whose indifference to life verges into bravoism, mere animal courage—devoid of honour and stripped of every vestige of sense of duty. Bayard and Ney were the tenderest and most chivalrous of men. Napoleon and the infidel Frederick the Great were as gentle in garrison as they were gallant in the field.

But the day advanced. The road lay through an undulating country, and the stripes of evergreen timber traversed the snow-covered ground like threads of emerald over a bridal veil—while the men ploughed their way along, sometimes climbing up the slippery sides of a hill, and then sliding into the valley below. Occasionally, a soldier would slip and fall, and then the stereotyped jokes about "minding the pieces," and other popular phrases, were sure to be repeated by some of the less quick-witted of the men. The sun was almost in the meridian when the spire of the village church of Arcey suddenly appeared above some trees that stood before us. It seemed to bring a feeling of security to all. It was Sunday, too—the day upon which the

bloodiest records of human strife are marked upon the pages of warfare; and who knew but we were marching to another combat that would live in history to add one more record to the bloody calendar? We knew that 100,000 men were in our front, and out of that number Death could reap a sufficient harvest to immortalise the day. The village was soon gained, and as we reached its high position the booming of the guns became more constant and somewhat louder. Beside the route the old people of the village knelt in prayer, and, like Moses upon the rock of Horeb, they asked Him to bless the effort of our arms. The *Angelus* bell was sounding as we hurried on, and mass was being celebrated for the repose of the souls that had that day fallen in action. The little boys who stood beside the road looked vaguely into our faces, with, I opine, a suspicion that they should one day be followers in our wake. The effect was singularly humanizing. For the moment it took some of the rough edges off the brutal part of our nature, that had been developed, and almost cultivated, by the hardships of the campaign. I could pity the sceptical mind that was not moved by the pious, but still almost antithetical contrast, of religion and war. But we made our destination for the night; and frost-bitten, hungry, and haggard, the men had to find cold comfort in a bed of mud, and a cup of coffee with a little sea biscuit as their only food. The captain-adjutant-major appeared to have selected the dirtiest place around the village for our encampment, or rather for our halting-place for the night, and for no other reason than the highly objec-

tionable one, that thousands of troops had been there before us, and had converted it into a mud hole. Tents were not allowed to be pitched, and the troops unrolled their four-feet-by-two blankets and tent patches, and lay in heaps upon the slimy earth, cowering and shivering like a drove of pigs huddled in a market-pen. But the play was going on in our immediate front now. On our right a stripe of timber stretched away over the adjoining slopes of the Vosges, and on our left an open country undulated towards the scene of the combat. Sheltered behind a friendly swell in the ground, and placed in position, a brigade of our troops was observable from where we lay, and which must have been the rear guard of the army engaged, for towards dusk they advanced beyond the rise, and disappeared into the gentle sloping valley beyond. Away upon the left a battery of artillery was belching in the direction of the village of Montbelliard, and as it too pressed forward, with its regiment of *Mobiles* behind, *tirailleurs* in front, and cavalry upon its flank, the joyous news came in: "*une grande victoire ?*" "*une grande victoire !*" I was looking through a field-glass and was trying to take in the position of our troops, when the focus rested on the battery that was playing upon the left of the position, and while looking at the gunners working the pieces, a concussion shell burst amidst the battery, and some men fell as if struck by the pieces.

"Distance *lens* enchantment to the view," said the ready-witted M'Alevey, coming to my side. I handed him the glass, and turned to make arrangements for the night. The *fourrier-sergent* (M'Crossin) was, as usual, foraging for provisions over the village.

The village church at Sainte Marie, the place where we had halted, was crowded with dead. M'Alevey, the Doctor, Mr. Cotter, and myself, went over to see the victims of the war, as they lay cold and rigid in all the quiet philosophy of death. Their faded honours were for ever gone. Grim and ghastly they looked, with the clothes torn from that portion of the wound where the "fell sergeant, strict in his arrest," had entered. I remember a somewhat unpleasant sensation possessing my mind as I looked on the array of dead within the village church at Sainte Marie, when M'Alevey, who stood by my side, broke the silence, and almost inaudibly said:

"Straightened by circumstances," as he looked down at the dead bodies that were heaped upon the spacious floor.

"M'Alevey, you're mad to joke upon such a subject," said Cotter, affecting to be shocked at the utterance—just as a music master might be annoyed at the grinding of a street barrel-organ.

"Not at all, sir; not at all. I'm only a little insane upon the jest question; will you try a pinch of snuff?" and M'Alevey offered the acceptable powder to myself and the now appeased Cotter.

"There's a beauty," said M'Alevey, pointing to a hideous-looking German, whose clothes were opened at the breast. A large hole, around which the clotted blood had hardened, was observable, just over the region of the heart. He was dressed in the blue uniform of the Prussian line, and could not have been long dead, for the plain, large flat buttons, common to the army, looked as if they had only been brushed

that morning. Beside him lay a youthful *Franc-tireur* who must have been an Adonis in life. The contrast was from the hideous to the handsome.

"*Mon capitaine*," said a young man at our side, who was dressed in a uniform that corresponded with that of the dead free-shooter. "This was my companion; he was killed by that ugly German, and I killed him," he added, pointing again to the hideous-looking Prussian soldier before us.

"When?" I asked, interested in the story.

"This morning, *mon capitaine*, near the ditch you may see running eastward from the skirt of the village, as we were pushing on the flank of the enemy, who occupied the place."

"Did you know him long," asked Lieutenant M'Alevey.

"Yes, yes, *mon lieutenant*," replied the young soldier; "we were reared together, went to school together, fought together, and I wouldn't care if we had died together." There was a seriousness in the young man's words that interested us all, and M'Alevey drew from him a story, of which, as well as I remember, the following is the substance:—

Pierre and Jacques Vileroy were cousins, and had been piously instructed, when boys, under the guidance of an uncle, who was a *curé* in one of the quiet villages that lay beside the Doubs. They had been educated together, and that mutual friendship common enough in boys, had grown into a feeling of brotherly love. They were of a common age,—and by a strange fatality the only cross in life they ever had was, that they had both become attached to

the one girl. It must have been a boyish love, for neither the dead free-shooter, Pierre, nor his living cousin and companion of yesterday could have been more than nineteen or twenty years of age. At the outbreak of the war they joined a company of *Franc-tireurs* that had been raised in their department—"only forty kilometres from where we are," said the young man, pointing in the direction of his home. Since then they had been in six fights, and upon one occasion the dead *Franc-tireur* had saved the life of the young man that now mourned over his corpse. "We had begun to feel the recklessness which, I suppose, is consequent upon a continued escape from danger,—and when, this morning, we were ordered to dislodge the Germans from their position behind the ditch, we imprudently charged over a narrow field that separated us from the enemy; many of our comrades fell, but Pierre and I pressed on, he, being the quickest runner, keeping ahead of me, and had crossed the ditch while I was still ten yards behind it. I saw him stop and take aim at a German who was running before him, and who fell dead; then this soldier turned upon Pierre, their bayonets crossed, I stopped and took aim, shot him through the heart, but not before he had run his bayonet through the bowels of my brave cousin," and the poor fellow wept tears of pious friendship as he looked down upon all that remained of his friend.

"Come," said M'Alevey, vividly affected by the simple story of the free-shooter, "let us go;" and the Doctor and I followed him out of the church and sought the shelter of our quarters, where our

orderlies had dressed and prepared a couple of fowls to help to appease our voracious appetites.

"Here's to the old land!" said Dr. Macken, holding up a cup of wine, after we had devoured the fowl, and had taken the bones by both ends. "The old land!" repeated all, and once again cups clashed to the fervid prayer of "God save Ireland!"

"And the girls we left behind us!" chimed in M'Alevey, looking as full of merriment, and seemingly as secure in the possession of a whole skin in the work before us, as if he was to be a spectator, and not a combatant, in the expected drama of to-morrow.

We were snugly housed in a deserted cabin, with our companions of the regiment crowded into the adjoining rooms, and chatting gaily about our successes. A knock is given at the door, M'Alevey invites the person outside to "come in."

"Orders, sir," said the sergeant of the week, handing over an order from the Brigadier:

"Officiers, sous officiers, et soldats:"

"The general commanding the 1st Brigade of the 2nd Division 15th Corps, late Army of the Loire, has to congratulate the 5th Battalion and that portion of the 2nd Battalion, and *La Compagnie Irlandaise* of the *Régiment Etranger*, now in Sainte Marie, with the spirited energy they have shown under the privations through which they have passed, and the order and discipline that they have observed under the trials of the last ten days. The general commanding cannot speak too highly of the admirable conduct of both officers and soldiers, and the manner in which they have borne the hardships of the campaign, assures him that the officers and soldiers of the 2nd and 5th Battalions, with *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, will to-morrow equal the gallantry of the

1st Battalion and that portion of the 2nd in our front, who have this day covered themselves with glory.

"Signed, J. REYARD,

"General de Brigade."

"Bravo, bravo," said Dr. Macken, as he emptied the contents of his cup.

"Bravo, bravo," said M'Alevey, as he significantly turned around and arranged what he called the "cow's feathers" in gentle layers for his bed. A word of instruction to the sergeant, and I, also, set about preparing my couch.

Another knock at the door. "*Entrez:*" and an artillery soldier, looking neither neat nor natty, the servant of an officer, made a thousand apologies, but asked us if we had a morsel of candle to spare "*pour mon lieutenant.*" There was none to be had, but the lieutenant of artillery afterwards told every officer in his battery the answer M'Alevey made the *garçon*, when he asked him if the "light of love" would be of any use, and offered the servant a match. M'Alevey's wit acted upon our drooping spirits as the wand of Prospero acted upon the barren wastes and backwoods, which it turned into golden fields and smiling gardens. Sometimes, indeed, he would make an attempt to be sage, but was never sad. He once told a Frenchman that he took him to be a Chinaman, and being asked the reason why, said, because he had "often seen faces like his painted on a tea-chest." But now he covered his head with his blanket, and was soon snoring as vigorously as if he were asleep—a circumstance it was not at all times easy to determine.

CHAPTER XIV.

"He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of death is fled—
The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress,
Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers—"

THE GIAOUR.

"Come, arouse thee, arouse thee, my brave Irish boys," said M'Alevey, the following morning, at 4 a.m., accompanying the invitation with no gentle pressure of his hand. "The men are falling in, Captain, and we have only time to roll up our blankets and be off."

"Has anybody been here?" I asked.

"Yes, Sergeant Frank Byrne. Come, Doctor; come, Cotter—"

'March to the battle-field,
The foe is now before us,'"

and M'Alevey made one of his ridiculous attempts to sing a ditty.

It was not very cold, but the numb sleepy and half-dead feeling one has when turning out so early after a fatiguing march the day before, was not easily shaken off. Our blankets were soon rolled up collar fashion, and slung across our shoulders, our belts on, and then out into the field where the men had lain during the night. A more pitiable sight I scarcely ever saw than the men of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* that

morning. They looked more like spectres than human beings. The dirt from the clayey soil covered nearly every portion of their uniforms; the heavy dew had soaked through their overcoats, had penetrated through their jackets, and left them shivering, gnashing their teeth with wretchedness and cold. As they stood in line they were doubled up, as if by the weight of their misery, and the very lepers of Lebanon would not have exchanged for such a fate, transient though it should be. But they were all up, for those who had fallen behind on the march the day before, had struggled into camp during the night, and now took their place in line. Then the head of the column soon moved on.

Along the route the oblong traces of shot and shell were visible in the snow, as they had torn up the earth, much as a man might scoop a hole in a mud hill by one long sweep of a shovel. To the right and left these marks were everywhere to be seen, leaving their dark blotches upon the ground, like ink stains upon a schoolboy's copy-book. Too often beside the suggestive shot and shell marks, blood crimsoned the snow, and ate holes through its yielding surface, while the warm current must have trickled from the wounded. It was quite dark above, but the reflection from the snow-covered ground threw a light upwards, that enabled one to see some distance around with tolerable clearness. We had still a few kilometres to march, as our troops had driven the enemy into and around the village of Montbelliard, where we heard the Germans were strongly entrenched, and in the attack on which we were to be employed. As I

looked around I saw more than a dozen of my men limping into action. We were not, indeed, without three or four who were shabbier hypocrites than Pecksniff, darker dissemblers than Tartuffe; but there was none of it that morning, all walked or limped or shuffled as best they could to "see the show," as I overheard a soldier say half-an-hour before we were at our destination. Sergeant Donnellan marched, as usual, at the head of the company, and set an example of vigorous limping that inspired the action of many a less determined soul.

"Donnellan," I said, moving up, and walking beside a man whom I was proud to call my friend, "Donnellan, did you rest at all last night?"

"Very little, sir," he replied, hesitating even to blame a government that was killing himself and his companions "according to regulation."

"The soldiers are not treated well," I replied; "but I cannot let the men know my opinions, though I may tell them in confidence to you."

"As you have broken the ice, we are not well treated, sir. As you know, Captain," he said, half-turning his head towards me, "as you know, a regimental dog in an English garrison wouldn't be treated as I see some of the rank and file—yes, and even some of the sergeants in the *Régiment Etranger*—treated every hour in the day. Men don't volunteer to fight famine; an empty haversack demoralises a man more than a shower of *mitraille*."

"I can understand a deficiency of stores occasionally," I answered; "but even when the regulation quantity is served out, an ordinary man has not

enough of food to sustain life during a campaign. In garrison it might indeed do very well, for there is no waste, but in the field it is starvation and nothing else. More than that, our men are still at a disadvantage. They cannot economise their food like Frenchmen, nor make palatable soup of grease and hard crusts. The fact is, Donnellan, the whole system is unsound, and I cannot believe that the French have ever studied the art of war. For instance, the Germans can make their soup in thirty minutes, while it takes our men three hours. Clothing the same, and boots worse than all."

"Then, again," said Donnellan, pointing to a dead soldier who lay beside the road; "look, captain, a dead Prussian—and, as usual, barefooted. Our fellows always strip the first dead German they meet of his boots, as they are better and stronger than the miserable *papier-maché* shoes supplied to themselves." And so I found afterwards, for all the dead of the enemy were barefooted.

"There is another, and another," I replied, as we climbed up a hill behind the village of Dung, where the dead of the enemy lay right and left of the road, all barefooted. Baggage waggons, ambulance waggons, and artillery trains now blocked the route. The smoke from the bivouac curled through the trees, and the hum of thousands of voices became suddenly audible.

"It is all owing to the *Intendance*," answered Donnellan, "it is impossible that one department can successfully muster the troops; manage the pay list; issue provisions, fuel, forage, and clothing; supervise

hospital service, manage the whole transport of the army, and take charge of all the materials of war.

"The greatest wonder of the German system appears to me to be its perfection and its economy. Prussia conducted two European campaigns, 1864 and 1866, at about the same expense that England incurred in the expedition to Abyssinia. Her soldiers only cost £29 10s. per head, per annum, while each Frenchman costs his country £41 10s., and the English soldier costs upward of £90 per year."

"And withal the Germans are so splendidly equipped," said Donnellan, looking down at his tattered raiment; "but they don't compel their men to carry the useless lumber which is heaped in our knapsacks. Look at that wretched boy staggering under seventy pounds' weight, half of which is pure rubbish," and Donnellan called my attention to a weakly-built youth, who was drawing his limbs along with painful efforts.

"Well, this war has proved that centralization is a failure. Each corps should be complete in itself, and be able to move in any direction without the necessity of reference to a central authority. The simple *piou-piou* of the French army would be rendered an efficient soldier under the system pursued by Germany, while now he is only an incumbrance and a delusion. But it is the same all through the service. The system of 'substitutes' is most nefarious. When the providing of those men was entrusted to private companies, the regiments were always full; but since the government undertook the job, there has been nothing but speculation and deceit. It is monstrous to think that

France, with all her military renown, would allow men to purchase 'exoneratives' by paying a certain sum of money into the military chest."

"Do you remember how much it cost to purchase a substitute, sir?" asked Donnellan, as we passed through the village of Dung.

"Oh, that varied; £100 was the general price, for which, however, the 'substitute' was scarcely over-provided. Consequently, France had a big army on paper and a very small one, indeed, on the actual muster-roll."

"To what do you attribute the unparalleled successes of the German troops, Captain?" asked Donnellan, a few minutes before we halted, and while the enemy's batteries were occasionally sending their shells over our heads.

"To the one broad fact, Donnellan—that in Prussia the army is made a profession, and its minutest details studied with care; while in France the life of a soldier is merely an occupation, where officers and men depend upon prestige and *élan* to carry them through all difficulties. Why even in Italy, one of the most fertile countries in the world, I have heard the officers of this regiment say that the men were often without bread. The French have fallen away—they want a Carnot, a Moreau, or a Napoleon. Every great man, who has handed his name down as a military genius, succeeded by adopting some new method of mobility. The genius of Carnot saved France at the Plains of Fleureus, won twenty-nine victories in a year, captured nearly 4000 guns, and dissolved the European coalition—and all by creating an army capable of

being moved with rapidity and order. Alexander, Cæsar, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon—all the same—conquered by similar means. There is, however, one thing I admire in the French regimental economy—I mean the *ordinaire*; only for the three sous each of the men contributed to that every five days, they would be in a state of chronic starvation."

"Yes, sir; that keeps them up certainly. But perhaps the military authorities depend too much upon it, and consequently relax the efforts they would otherwise make if it were not in existence."

"Perhaps so; but still I like the system."

"But the forty francs recruits get on joining their regiments is useless, for when kit and everything else is deducted, they generally find themselves in debt. But," he continued, looking to his direct front, "we are nearly up; the *musique de la guerre* is belching away. Do you think we shall have much fighting to-day, Captain?" he asked, after a moment's pause.

"Oh, it is impossible to say, sergeant. I suppose we are in for a little of it in any case. If Villersexel be really carried, as we heard at Clairval, I don't see how the Germans can hold Montbelliard, for they would be crushed between the two wings of the army. If Villersexel is not taken, however, Montbelliard will hold out at all cost—for the fall of either place would in all probability enable us to raise the siege of Belfort."

"If anything happens to me will you write to my mother, captain?" he asked, without betraying the shadow of emotion, and with a tone as cool and firm as if he was speaking of a ride across his native heath in Galway.

"Nonsense, old boy. But if it should of course I will—that is, if I am not wiped out myself."

Suddenly I heard a heavy footstep behind me, and turning around I saw Sergeant Carey holding something in his hand, and rushing towards where I was.

"Captain, captain, take it, take it; mind it is hot, sir," said the sergeant, as he offered me something that in the dark looked like a sausage.

"Take what?" I said, looking anxiously at the indistinct outline of what he held in his hand.

"A herring, sir, a red herring," and he held up a delicious fish just from the fire. I never asked Carey how he obtained the herring, but Dr. Macken had a standing joke against me afterwards that the fish was his, and that Carey had taken it from his orderly, and carried it in the cap of a boy who was "down" with the smallpox.

"Is it clean, Carey?" I asked.

"Oh, as Glenfield starch, sir;" and I soon consumed the delicious morsel, holding it by both ends, and picked it clean. Just then we wheeled into a field, and took up our place in line of battle.

It was just daylight. About fifty yards behind where we stood a stripe of wood stretched right and left as far as the eye could see; before us lay an open undulating country, a kind of rolling prairie, beyond which were dark patches of timber, where we truly guessed the Germans lay. A little to our front and left, lay the village and chateau of Montbelliard, before which, and sheltered by the undulating ground, lay 100,000 of our troops in position. It was a glorious sight! There were, indeed, no bayonets glittering in

the morning sun, no banners fluttering in the breeze; but there was a quiet, calm look about those lines of battle that inspired a sternness of purpose in every man's heart.

"*Bon jour*," said Lieutenant Kuess, taking off his *kepi* in salute to the first *fliegende zuckerhut*, or "flying sugar loaf," as the Germans call the shells, as the first of the messengers came hissing from the chateau, and rushed away miles behind our position, just as if the enemy wished to show us the length and range of their pieces. The play began then, and our battalion was ordered into the wood to light fires and cook their breakfasts, and I was seriously assured by the Captain-Adjutant-Major that at noon it would be our place to lead an attack upon the German batteries! But we were to take our "death feast" first.

I walked with Mr. M'Alevey over the rise in order to have a better view of the fight. Around our position the dead of the enemy were somewhat thickly strewn. Noon came! "*Sac-a-dos! Sac-a-dos!*" We were to march by the left. *La Compagnie Irlandaise* led the way, and was the first of 20,000 men who formed the third line of battle. Two lines were already in position upon our left, sheltered behind a rise in the ground, upon the uppermost slope of which our batteries were sending their "flying sugar loaves," at the chateau Montbelliard. We had about one kilometer to march yet before we would be in position, and when about half way across a round shot passed through our ranks between the files, and ploughed up the ground at the feet of General Pitevern and staff, who was just beside us. Shall I confess that I ingloriously ducked my

head, and that our *Commandant*, who walked beside me, called out "*pas de gymnastique, pas de gymnastique*," while Sergeant Donnellan showed me better conduct by walking as coolly and as erect as if he was a moving landmark. We were ascending a slight rise in the ground at the time, and the ranks were more than usually open, which accounts for the ball passing through without injuring any of the men.

The General quickly changed his position, while our fine old Colonel, always on horseback, checked the *Commandant* for ordering the "double." Before us lay a wood, upon which the left of the line was to rest, and once up to the place we were once more face to face with the foe. About two hundred yards in our direct front lay one of our own batteries, behind which the first and second line of battle was formed, and to both of which we were drawn up in a parallel line. Not a German was to be seen, but their ugly concussion shells burst in and around the battery, and sent their splinters quite thick enough about our ears. It was miserable work, standing behind our guns coolly looking at danger without any of the excitement which turns it into a desire for blood. But it was a lesson in training the troops to coolness under fire. The shells burst before us, we knew that each flew into many particles, flying off as if seeking a victim; and then to stand stone still, not a muscle moving, to hold the breath, expecting every second to get a blow, and then to draw a long sigh of relief when the pieces "bir-r-ed" past and left you untouched, was a somewhat trying task. With the old shell there was often time to avoid the danger by lying upon the ground

while the fuse burned out and the shell burst, the pieces flying upwards and around. But with the breech or segment shell the pieces fly to the front, and must act as a powerful propeller upon retreating troops. James Grant, in his "Constable of France," tells of the aged Conde de Fuentes who charged at the head of the infantry at the battle of Rocroi, in the year 1643, seated in an arm chair, and I often thought that the feeling of men standing behind a battery with ordered arms, while the enemy's shell is playing about their ears, must be somewhat akin to the feelings of the men who carried the chair in which the Conde de Fuentes was seated. It may have been very fine for the Conde, but I could pity the men. But there was no help for it, there we were, and there we should remain; and some of the officers of the regiment smoked their cigars, stood before their men, and let it rain away.

"First blood, captain," said Sergeant Terence Byrne. I turned around and saw the blood trickling from the face of Corporal Paul Cullen, who was just grazed by a splinter hitting the malar bone. Towards two o'clock the firing slackened in our front, and orders came for the *Régiment Etranger* to occupy the wood upon which the left of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* rested. The Irish Company alone was to cover 200 yards of the front; the place was pointed out by the *Commandant*, and we moved to take up our new position. We came however in view of the German batteries, and had no sooner entered the bush, than a hell of fire broke around our ears. The shells fell at the rate of about one every second, crushing, bursting,

and tearing everything in their course, the splinters throwing the snow into our faces as we crouched low behind the shelter of the wood, or sending "limbs" of small trees upon our backs as we lay full length upon the earth.

Contrary to expectation, no attack was made upon our position—nor were we called upon to attack, as we had been told in the morning. News had arrived during the day that Villersexel was not carried, and that Bourbaki with his left wing of the *Armée de l'Est* was in full retreat towards the Swiss frontier. Daylight merged into dusk, and dusk lapsed into night, before the cannon from the enemy's batteries ceased to play upon our position. A few of our men were wounded—none seriously; and as the last shot from the German position passed over our heads, many of the officers bade "*bon soir*" to the flying shell that, like the herald of the close of the strife, was sent miles over our position. The work had ceased for the day.

Beyond the open space that divided us from the enemy, the fires from their bivouac illumined the night with their livid glare, "while the stars up above, with their glittering eyes, kept watch while the army was sleeping." Beside our position, a horse that had been killed during the day, and which had been partly devoured by the famished soldiers, afforded a substantial meal to such of the men as were not too choice in their food, and to the medical students of the company an opportunity of exercising their skill in cutting sections from its quarters. The dew fell heavily upon the wearied troops, and the thin foliage of January afforded but poor protection

against the damp, cold air, loaded with pain-creating moisture. A sickly fire, more smoke than flame, struggled through a few logs, beside which some of us, stretched upon twigs pulled from the branches of the trees, in vain tried to court a few minutes of repose. There was no moon, and all around was as dark as Erebus.

"*Aux armes ! aux armes !*" was shouted along the line, as the roll of musketry swelled throughout the camp at midnight.

"Fall in, fall in," M'Alevey called out.

"A night attack, captain," said Lieutenant Cotter.

"Fall in, men ; fall in."

"*Cessez le feu, cessez le feu,*" blew out three regimental bugles,

"*Cessez le feu, cessez le feu,*" echoed along the line.

"See what's up now, Mr. M'Alevey."

"All right, captain," said M'Alevey, returning in a few minutes ; "it was only an old artillery horse that had broken loose and strayed between the lines, which some d—d *Mobiles* had mistaken for an Uhlan."

Long before the dawn next morning (Tuesday, the 17th), the troops were again upon their feet, cowering in the cold. The hum of 100,000 men raised around us a murmur, such as streams make when their waters meet in embrace. The clouds scudded over the giant trees under which we lay, and gave us but an occasional glance at the stars that blinked away as if they had nothing else to do. The snow was melting, and had made miniature pools over the plateau upon which the greater part of the troops had

lain. Batches of shivering soldiers stood around the embers of the half-burned logs of wood. The chill north-east wind penetrated to the marrow of the famished soldiers. Hundreds of men were there around the choked camp-fires of the bivouac bare-footed—thousands were frost-bitten; every man of whom would be compelled to take his share in the work of the day. But association with hardship had hardened the heart of every one, and there was little or no pity in men's thoughts. Our hearts had become steeled against compassion, and day by day we were becoming more brutalized in our ideas.

I suppose I must have been in a somewhat dreamy mood, as M'Alevey stood by my side and looked into my face, just as a Jew might look at a suspicious bank cheque. "Here comes our 'good morning,'" said he, as a shell flew over our heads kilometres to our rear.

"*Bon jour, bon jour,*" cried a thousand voices, while *kepis* flew off in salutation to the airy messenger. And then our own batteries sent the return shell of defiance over the German lines, and the play began for the day. Before this time we were in line just behind a battery, before which a curtain had been thrown up during the night, and the shell from the enemy's lines swept through the embrasures and tore up the earth everywhere about our feet. We had no shelter, as the space between us and our guns—about 100 yards—was as flat as a dining table, and as the shell struck the ground and burst, the ugly pieces again bir-r-r-ed passed our ears. Several of the men had been hurt the day before—one or two were

missing—but, on the whole, the chances of war were singularly favourable to the soldiers of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*.

"Hold up your head," said somebody to one of the soldiers upon the left of the company, as he was seen ducking before the shells which flew around him.

"I will, sir, when there's room for it," was the half-laughing rejoinder of the man, who I afterwards heard, had just stooped in time to allow the heel of a shell from coming in contact with his head. About this time the fire grew hot again, and the firing from the enemy's batteries became continuous. We occupied a useless and a dangerous place. To our right and to our left there was shelter, and it was culpable folly to expose men without any object to be gained. But worse still! About 10 A.M. a change was made in the disposition of the company, and I was ordered to face the wood—thus placing my men at right angles with our own battery, and open to an enfilading fire from the enemy's guns. It was butchery! One shot would have swept the Irish Company off its feet—and as the shells from the enemy's batteries were falling quite thick enough about us at this time, there was some danger of this calamity happening. But as obedience is the first duty of a soldier, we took up our position, and then pointed out to our *Commandant* the uselessness of exposing the men in so dangerous a place, where a single shell would sweep through the company from flank to flank,—and the *Commandant* allowed me to remove the company to a place of comparative security, under the slope of a hill, about 100 yards to

the right of where we then stood. Here we had quite a joyous time of it. The men gathered tins-full of snow-water, put them upon the almost dead fires, and used their last grain of coffee.

Noon came again, and the *sac-a-dos ! sac-a-dos !* was shouted along the line. Down comes the colonel, his hardy grey Arab bespattered with mud. "*En avant—marche !*" and off we went, the Irish Company leading the way. We passed in rear of the exposed battery, behind which we had stood in the morning, and then skirted a wood that lay before us, keeping well under the shadow of the trees. Inside the wood a road, or rather a footpath, ran in a parallel line to the course we were walking along its outer edge, and why the movement was made in full view of the German lines, instead of moving under cover of the trees, I never could understand. But whatever was the cause, many a life was lost by the exposure. I often think it a pity that officers are not in some degree more responsible for useless bloodshed, whether caused by incapacity, indifference, or neglect. Sir Charles Napier said that an incapable general was a murderer. But the enemy appeared to allow us to march on until about 2000 of us were fairly exposed to their fire, and then they brought a couple of batteries to play upon our line, and opened upon us simultaneously, throwing their shells amongst the men with precision, and driving some of the soldiers like crushed frogs against the trees beside which they walked. Then the *Commandant* indeed shouted, "To the wood, to the wood." I stood beside an opening in the timber while I allowed

the men to pass through, and as I looked along the line I saw shell after shell plunge into the ranks, and scatter the limbs and bowels of the soldiery about the place as effectually as if the poor wretches had been blown from the mouth of the cannon. At that moment, I experienced the most sickly sensation I had ever felt under fire. As I stood with my back to the enemy, while the men were passing into the wood, a cold sensation, as if a bar of iron was passed down my back, appeared to creep along my spine. To turn about and face the bursting shell was easy, but even a few seconds of coolly standing with one's back to the fire while the particles were bir-r-r-ing past our ears in flocks, was to avoid the extravagant, excessively unpleasant. But it was only for a few seconds, the men passed under the shadow of the trees, and as the ground sloped downwards, the position was one of shelter and security to all.

Once again we were ordered to the front, and again the inspiring "*en avant—marche!*" greeted our ears as we stepped forward once more, expecting to meet the enemy at close quarters.

CHAPTER XV.

"What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; th' unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield."

MILTON.

Yes, we thought we were "in for it," as I heard some of the soldiers say, while we moved towards the edge of the timber to meet the expected advance of the Germans. Our pickets were driven in, and rushed into our line in breathless disorder. They almost broke our ranks as we advanced under a sprinkling of rifle bullets to cover their retreat. The mitrailleuse growled away on our right, while the shell from the enemy's batteries burst around us in terrible rapidity. They flew into the wood behind our position, and exploded with a noise like the springing of a mine. But it was only a feeler! After exchanging a few shots the Germans retired under cover of their batteries, while scarcely a head was seen where we expected to see thousands. The enemy wanted to find out whether we still occupied the position in front of Montbelliard in force. They expected, or knew, that the main army was in retreat, and thought to drive us into confusion by forcing all from the field. The affair, however, cost both sides a few lives, and in the wood around and on the open plain before us, many fresh dark motionless objects were dotting the patches of still unmelted snow, or lying half covered

in the pools of water. Shortly afterwards a regiment of *Chasseurs-à-pied* of our division, worked bravely up to within three hundred yards of the enemy's lines, suffered severely in their trial, and retreated minus half their number. The object of the movement was a feint too, and probably impressed the enemy with the belief that we were still in force, and even meditated becoming the aggressors.

In the meantime the battalion had not come off unscathed. A dreary procession was flowing from the ranks, as man after man was carried to the rear, amongst the rest one or two of the men of my own Company. The *Commandant* sent round for the list of casualties, and for the names of such men as had distinguished themselves during the day, but as we had not been closely engaged, I had no names to recommend for the military medal—the soldier's reward for distinguished conduct in the field.

I could, indeed, have named half-a-dozen men who well merited such a high distinction for their gallant coolness under a withering fire, and for the example of *sang froid* they showed to soldiers for the second time in action. But I hoped for a better opportunity, as I saw that there were men around me who would encounter any danger at my command. There was a cool stern purpose in their conduct; a calm easy determination in their countenances, that spoke of a resolve to do their duty to the letter.

In the meantime the first battalion of our regiment had been engaged in the attack upon the Chateau of Montbelliard, and had been beaten off with much slaughter, only 300 returning out of 700 of our own

battalion that had left us in the morning, and the officers gave us the depressing assurance that the Chateau could not be carried without a more vigorous bombardment than had yet been seriously attempted.

"What's that?" I asked of Lieutenant Kuess, who had just returned from the attack upon the Chateau, as I perceived a hole in his blanket that looked as if it had been made by a rifle ball. The lieutenant looked suspiciously at the spot, unrolled his blanket, and there through the coat, just under the region of the heart, a similar hole had been made through the tunic, which was quickly opened, then the waistcoat, and there lodged in his watch a flattened bullet had smashed the works, and lay between the cases.

"*Vive la chance,*" said the lieutenant.

"Saved in the nick of time," said M'Alevey at our side, who had come while the Frenchman was searching for the bullet. Another officer had the skirt of his tunic torn off by a piece of a shell, a third had a bullet lodged in his tightly-folded blanket, a fourth had the *galon* on his *kepi* cut by a rifle bullet, while a fifth, all of the one battalion, had had a ball flattened against a five-franc piece that was in his waistcoat pocket. But it was all "*vive la chance.*" Four officers had been killed in the attack.

All the while the shells kept tumbling in and about our position, occasionally killing a soldier or two, and wounding several others. Sometimes a sound, just such as a mallard makes with its wings, when alighting near a pool, would be heard above, as the heel of a shell flew through the damp cold atmosphere. But night was beginning to fall upon the scene.

If there be limits to human misery they were

reached on the night of the 17th January, 1871. The entire plain was a gigantic pond—water, water everywhere. The troops had been on foot an hour before the earliest streaks of dawn, and were worn out with cold, famine, and misery. The highest quality a soldier can possess is that of a hardy and obedient campaigner, for in action every man must do some share of the fighting, undergo some share of the danger, without necessarily possessing any other qualification but that of brute courage. To be sure, some poet sings that bravery “is the brightest virtue, and most ennobles a man.” It may be so, but it alone is not at all times the best test of the highest type of a soldier.

“Well, here’s to try the efficacy of the cold water cure, said M’Alevey, as he rolled himself in his blanket and stretched out upon the slimy ground, sinking into its embrace as effectually as if he lay upon a bed of feathers. There was no food, unless indeed, some of the men had a morsel of biscuit, which in many cases it was impossible to gnaw. Before us lay a farm-house, into which the officers crowded in heaps, amongst the rest Dr. Macken and our colonel. Beside us an old well gaped through the ground, from which the only hedge upon the plateau ran up to the house in front of us. About a dozen fires blazed over the plain, around which the officers of the various regiments stood and talked over the haps and mishaps of the day. The troops lay half buried in the melted snow, the wet eating into their bones, and making many a brave soul wish for that sleep that knows no waking. About us lay the bodies of the few men who in the sheltered place had been killed during the last two days, acting

as grim reminders of the work in hands. They were as thick as leaves around us, and once during the night when I stretched out my hand it came in contact with the face of a dead *chasseur-a-pied*. Just a little to my right, and beside a pool, lay a young artillery man dead, and his hand and arm partly hid in the water. The moon's rays shed a liquid pathway of light across the watery surface, and I could easily fancy with Charles Dickens that along that track the released soul of the soldier was making its way to heaven. The wind made ripples upon the little waves and moaned a requiem over the corse, while the passing clouds drew momentary palls over the spot, as if hiding man's work from the eye of God.

Beside where I lay a battery of artillery was posted, and one of the gunners brought a Krupp shell, which had not exploded, and showed it to us, as we sat upon the ground. Unlike the French shell, it was not "pin grooved," but must have had a smooth surface before fired. Its leaded coating was cut by the grooves of the gun as it passed through the tube, thus, as it appears to an inexperienced artillerist, giving it more accuracy in its rotary motion, and a better fit in the grooves of the gun. In the French shell the pins are already made to correspond with the gun; in the Krupp shell the grooves are made *en passage*. But we were too weary that night to study questions of guns and gunnery. Even M'Alevey ceased to joke, and for the only time during the campaign I heard him grumble as he lay with the hood of his great-coat over his head, and a log of wood for his pillow. The men sat upon their knapsacks in fours, back to back, in

preference to stretching upon the ground, and dozed to sleep as best they could. As I strolled down to take a last look at the company that night, I could see the work of the past two or three days written as plainly upon the countenances of the men as if it were stereotyped upon their foreheads. Sergeant Donnellan was already giving way, his once giant form having dwindled into that of a shivering, starved and hungry-looking man, with cheek bones almost cutting the air. Sergeants Terence and Frank Byrne were much the same, but Sergeant Carey bore up with wondrous good humour, and must have had a constitution as durable as wrought iron. He was everywhere. If a dispute broke out between the men Sergeant Carey was sure to be first upon the spot, and was equally sure to put a stop to it in such a manner as was likely to satisfy all, either with the rigour or impartiality of his dealings.

As the petals of the flowers in early spring open to the refreshing influence of the sun's rays, as if in gladdened salutation, the soldiers of the Irish Company were, on the morning of the 18th, joyously refreshed as the sun shone above them. The sky was beautifully clear, the air was motionless, and the flush of comfort coursed merrily through our veins as we again stood in line of battle. We had, as usual, taken up our position an hour or two before daybreak, cold, wet, and hungry; but when an hour after daylight the sun came out of the funereal envelope of clouds that obscured its disc, we thought ourselves blessed indeed. The firing, also, appeared to be even hotter than the day before, as if the artillerists were anxious to show

the metaphysical influence of heat upon famine. The shells from the enemy's guns did not burst so easily upon the soft surface of the plateau as they did the two previous days, particularly the first day, when the frost covered the ground with its icy layers. Unexploded shells were not uncommon around our position, for many of them were buried in the soil without striking their noses against anything sufficiently hard to cause an explosion. But they fell and exploded quick and fast enough for all that. The guns of the Chateau were belching away as vigorously as ever, and a new battery erected during the night sent an oblique fire ricocheting through our lines. There were no traverses in our hastily-erected batteries, and the oblique fire from the near position of the enemy did much damage. But the direct fire from the Chateau was even more strongly sustained than on the previous days, as they appeared desirous of giving us all we could take, for they must have known that before many hours we would be retreating. We had failed at all points to carry Montbelliard, and the German position on the left bank of the Lusine was stronger than ever. Chembrier, on his extreme left, was surprised by General Keller, and gave the finishing stroke to our chances of success. The Chateau at Montbelliard is in itself a place of considerable strength and vastness. It is built at the extreme limits of the town, and commands a view of fourteen villages. It stands upon a rock, and is in parts surrounded by a trench cut out of the rock, which trench is spanned by a bridge. The place has much historical interest, and it is

not a little singular that in 1422 it was the prison of Frederick of Hohenzollern, one of the ancestors of the present prince, to whom France can trace the darkest chapter in her history. In the Chateau also are the remains of Saint Mainbœuf, a Scottish missionary who suffered martyrdom under Louis le Debonnair. Much of the importance that Montbelliard has attained has been owing to the number of pilgrims who visited the shrine of Saint Mainbœuf, who is, even to this day, spoken of with veneration by the peasantry.

But it was still wet under foot, and when, at about 10 a.m., we were ordered to occupy our old position in the wood, the sun suddenly became overcast, a penetrating wind swept over the open ground, and we were again cold, wet, and hungry. All this day we had nothing to eat except some equine steaks that the men had cooked for breakfast. It was often a matter of amusement to see the men advancing, sword-bayonet in hand, "with murderous thoughts intent," looking for poor dobbin, the tenderest portion of whose carcass would shortly afterwards be flavouring the air, as it was being converted into *pot au feu au cheval*. But there was little time for cooking that day, even if we had had anything that required the aid of a fire to make palatable, which we had not.

While crossing in rear of our batteries, six companies of Turcos filed out before us in retreat, their colours fluttering in the breeze, the only flags, regimental or company, I had seen in France. There were but two regiments of the regular army with Bourbaki—our own and the 39th of the Line, and both had left their colours in Africa, and the 39th alone of the

whole *Armée de l'Est* was provided with a band. There were, however, several *Régiments du March*. These are composed of men belonging to the various Line Regiments in the service, and who, having lost their own corps, were huddled into the first *Régiment du March* they came into contact with. Being all strangers to each other they must necessarily lack that *esprit du corps* so essential to the soldier. The Turcos appeared singularly cool, although the shells were falling about them, and one passed through their ranks, killing in its course four or five of the soldiers, and rolling over one of the standard-bearers as well. But the ranks were dressed up immediately, the wounded were carried off the field, and I saw the Turcos no more. We had however one in the *Régiment Étranger*, a man about fifty years of age, and who had risen to the grade of sous-lieutenant after eighteen years' service. The officers called him *Mocosh bono*, and he was one of the best tempered men I had ever met with. He, like his race, was a fatalist, and held it to be a crime to attempt to avoid what Providence had ordained. He was fond of telling stories of officers and men who sought shelter during the serious combats through which he had passed, and who only rushed into the jaws of death. *Mocosh bono* would no more think of ducking his head than he would of cursing or taking the name of Allah in vain. He was, in many ways an exemplary man, and I often thought that the Christian soldiers of the regiment might profitably follow his example and advice.

But until noon our third day at Montbelliard was much the same as the two previous ones. Standing

fire without returning it until the Captain-Adjutant-Major called out "*La Compagnie Irlandaise pour tirailleur.*" Yes, we were in for it then! Our time had come to manœuvre up as near as we could to the enemy's lines. Moving along the rear of our batteries, we worked up to the place from which we were to step into the open ground that divided us from the enemy and about 400 yards of which we had to cross apparently under the clear sweep of their guns. Before us lay a plateau about 400 yards of which was flat, and then it undulated for about 400 yards up to the enemy's lines. Just where the plateau became broken into ridges there was a slight shelter from the enemy's guns, and it was there that we were ordered to relieve a company of our regiment that was already in position. The Captain-Adjutant-Major was always kind to the soldiers of the Irish Company and generously recognized the difficulties they had to contend against. He was minutely careful in pointing out the position of the enemy's lines, and then took off his *kepi* and wished me "*bonne chance, Capitaine.*" By taking a careful look at the position of the enemy's batteries and the nature of the ground over which we had to travel, it appeared certain that there were portions of the plateau that were not under fire, and that with careful handling we could work up to our position with little or no exposure to ourselves, by taking advantage of the irregularities of the ground, and by making the men double across or over the most exposed portions of the way. The men were thrown into Indian file, ten feet between each man, and we worked up to our post without losing a

man. The position was much exposed to the fire of the enemy's batteries. It was on a neck or bend that almost penetrated the German lines, and the shelter was so low that the men had to lie flat on the cold, wet earth, to avoid the shells that just topped the gentle rise before them. But we had further instructions from the captain whom we relieved. We had to send out posts under Lieutenant Cotter, Sergeants Donnellan and Corr, upon the right and left slopes of our position, to command a view of the ravine on our either side. All the time the shells from the enemy's batteries were tearing upon the ground around us, one or two falling amongst the scattered soldiers and throwing the earth in showers over their bodies, and nearly hitting some of the men with particles of small stone or sand.

On our right the Chateau was showing its teeth occasionally as its guns nearly enfiladed our post. Before us were four batteries of field pieces, and to our left was a deserted village over which a new battery had been erected, and under all was a line of skirmishers well sheltered by the undulating ground, and sending their stumpy bullets with sickly sound about our ears. Just upon our left front there was a house, from which a few impudent soldiers occasionally walked and tried to pick off any of the men who imprudently showed more of their persons than was safe to themselves.

For three hours we kept firing away at each other, expending much ammunition with little effect on either side. At 5 o'clock, however, the Germans commenced moving in our front. They drew in their out-

posts and appeared as if they were about contracting their lines. I reported the circumstance to our Colonel, and received as a reply, a company to support my own. Night came on, and I advanced my sentries about fifty yards. About 1 a.m. next morning we were still unrelieved. My men were exhausted. My officers were worn out too. I had, however, to make the rounds, and I took a few file with Sergeant Frank Byrne to accompany me. Between our posts and the posts the Germans occupied during the day there was a ditch sheltered by some scrub on one side of it. When I advanced my sentries I placed two of them at this ditch, and while on my round I passed and inspected the positions. The night was dark and cloudy. The German batteries could not be more than 400 yards off, and the German sentries might be within a few paces of us. Suddenly we heard some slight noise in our front. It was too audible to be mistaken. It came again, and I ordered the men to kneel down at given intervals, prepared to fire. Then there was a heavier, but yet a stealthy movement heard, and I was now aware that the enemy was advancing. I guessed that they were about fifty yards in our front, but there were too many of them to move without making a noise. We retired and joined our main post as quickly as we could. The *petite-postes* were called in, and all our men, *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, with the company that had come to our aid, stood ready to receive the Germans as soon as the first shot was fired. The Germans moved on. They found our outposts deserted, but they moved on as stealthily as ever. I happened to be at the end of our cover

nearest the German advance. Beside me lay a dead soldier, and I took his rifle and ammunition pouch, and as the first of the enemy was well distinguishable through the gloom and were about thirty yards from us I took aim and fired. Then a volley was flung at the advancing troops, who pressed gallantly forward, returning the fire at the same time. But we had the advantage of position, and we were sheltered. We were kneeling, and could see them much better than they could see us, for a streak of gray clouds backed their position and gave us a dim outline of their forms. Again we plunged a volley, and then another volley, into their ranks. But still they pressed on until we were not ten yards apart, and then the shout, "*a la bayonet ! a la bayonet !*" was heard. Our men rushed to the charge ; there was a short, sharp struggle, when the Germans ran, leaving ten dead, many wounded, and two prisoners, as trophies of the fray. We lost three men, while our companion company lost four. But our General thought it time for us to move out of that position, and the little affair was no sooner over than we received orders to retire at once, and it was well for us that we did so, for in five minutes afterwards the position was occupied by five hundred Bavarians. When we reached our regiment we found that the army was all the time in full retreat. Troops were hurrying off in all directions, and it was expected that three or four o'clock would see the last of the army of Bourbaki away. To our regiment was left the honour of covering the retreat, and as we were the last company of the regiment, we should be the last to leave the field.

But tired nature should rest. Even in the presence of death exhausted nature must have repose. By the dim and flickering bivouac fire, with a 'heavy mist falling upon the ground, I had a few sticks thrown together, a log of wood for a pillow, and had a few hours' rest.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Mountains interpos'd
Make enemies of nations who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one."

COWPER.

"Captain, Captain," whispered somebody in my ears about 5 a.m. on the morning of the 19th, and after I had had nearly three hours' sleep upon my luxurious bed of sticks.

"What is it, sergeant?" I asked, looking up at Sergeant Frank Byrne, who bent over me, the butt of his Chassepôt resting upon the ground, while the light of a sickly camp fire fell upon his face and enabled me to trace at a glance the effect of the last few weeks of famine and fatigue upon his frame. Sergeant Byrne was in every way a clean and exemplary soldier, yet even he appeared in no holiday or presentable attire that still morning in January, 1871. For weeks the men had had no opportunity of washing hands nor face, and for the last four days even the officers of the army were compelled to allow the dirt to accumulate upon their persons, except, indeed, what could be removed by a vigorous application

of snow-water. Byrne's eyes were sunken, his cheeks were hollow, and the cheek-bones protruded so as to almost speak "hunger." His once well proportioned body was attenuated, and his face well tanned by exposure, was made darker still by a less cleanly hue. His uniform was covered with dirt, the clayey soil upon which we had lain when out on *tirailleur* the day before having left dark blotches from his *kepi* to his gaiters.

"The *Commandant* wishes to see you, sir; the adjutant has been here," whispered the sergeant, straightening himself as he delivered his instruction.

I was soon upon my legs, much refreshed after my three hours' repose. I could see by the flickering camp fires that some of our troops had departed, and that preparations were being made by the men of the *Régiment Étranger* to follow the retreating *Armée de l'Est*. The men were falling in, and the *sous officiers* were busy calling the rolls in a hushed under tone, and "*disparu, disparu,*" was the most common answer I heard as I passed along the line. I soon found the fire, beside which the *Commandant* sat engaged in putting a fresh round of cartridge into a splendid double-barrelled breech-loading pistol which he held in his left hand.

"*Bon jour, mon Commandant,*" I said, as I took off my *kepi* in salutation.

"*Bon jour, Capitaine,*" replied the *Commandant*, as he looked up for a second before placing his pistol in his belt.

"Captain," continued the *Commandant*, "of course you know we are to form the rear guard for the army,

and it is more than likely that before we get away we shall have the Germans down upon us. As your company is the last of the battalion, you will be required to act as rear guard to the regiment. Last in last out, you know," said the chief, with an apologetical expression which might mean, "It's just your luck."

"All right, *mon Commandant*, I'll do my best," I replied.

"Well," said he, "if you are pressed hard, retreat along the road towards Sainte Marie, where, if the enemy press you, you will be sure to overtake the battalion."

"But are we to remain here?" I asked, hoping for a negative reply.

"No, no; you'll follow us into the open: it is there we shall possibly encounter the Germans, for they are massing on three sides of us. If we are not attacked, you will continue to retreat with us; if we are attacked in force, we shall all have to fight, but if only slightly, you will engage the enemy and give us time to get away. You understand?" he asked, looking into my face, and raising himself from the ground.

"Perfectly," I answered.

"Very well, *Capitaine*, if God pleases we shall meet again," and the chief extended his hand to me, and then moved away to bring the battalion "out into the open."

The Irish Company was quickly in line and prepared for the route. The head of the battalion soon after commenced to move, and then with cautious steps we followed in its wake. "Silence, silence," was the whispered command, as we made towards the gate-

like passage in the end of the wood, which led to the open plain beyond. The effort to march quietly was exciting. The least noise would betray our presence to the enemy. Those villainous tins rattled again, and sounded like the discharge of artillery upon our strained senses. "Silence, silence," hisses the Captain-Adjutant-Major, as some incautious soldier stumbled into a bush, and his comrades fell over him to be companions in the catastrophe. At this time the bulk of the army had been for two days in full retreat towards Besançon. We were the last regiment in the field. If we were attacked in force it would have been another Orleans for the *Régiment Étranger*. The Germans, however, knew what they were about, and appeared to judge our movement with mechanical accuracy. Just as the head of the Irish Company was about emerging from the wood, we halted and listened for any noise that could indicate the advance of the enemy, but all was as silent as the grave. It was quite dark. Objects twenty paces away were undistinguishable. We were commencing to congratulate ourselves upon our probable success in avoiding the wary foe, when suddenly, like a clap of thunder, a volley, then another and another, was thrown upon our ranks, and the musical "Hurrah, hurrah, vorwärts, vorwärts," of the Bavarians came ringing upon our ears. Before us a line of *tirailleurs* was stretched across the plain, and they quickly gave way before the advancing enemy, and came pell-mell upon our ranks. I had not been told that the *Chasseurs-à-pied* were in our front, and we were about to pour a volley into their ranks, but that we fortunately

discovered our mistake in time. The *tirailleurs* however retreated, and left us once more nearest the foe. For a few minutes the battalion hesitated, as if expecting to be attacked in force, and then they marched away, leaving us behind in the post of honour. We lined the wood and awaited the enemy. Hap-hazard fire was then thrown into our retreat, and a hap-hazard fire was returned. The Germans hesitated to advance in the dark, and we should engage them in order to enable the battalion to escape. If the enemy moved on a little in our front they could have effectually cut off our retreat and brought us up like a beast at bay. The dropping fire was for sometime sustained on both sides, each aiming at where the flash of their enemy's guns indicated their presence. At this time the Germans could not have been more than fifty yards in our direct front. Meanwhile the fire grew hotter as the enemy closed in upon us. Their figures were distinguishable, and as I was unsupported I ordered the men to fall back, firing as they retired. While we were moving away I heard the stock of a rifle come into contact with somebody's head, and this was quickly followed by a low, hissing order of "keep up to your work, you dog." As I turned around to ascertain the cause I could trace the dim outline of Sergeant Carey's well-proportioned form, standing over the prostrate figure of a fallen man. The stricken soldier was tumbled into one of the many thorny bushes with which the wood was abundantly dotted, and the efforts he made to save himself from the effects of the thorns were amusingly dramatic. A revolver at his head quickly brought him up to toe.

the line with his companions, by whom he was afterwards known under a *soubriquet* not complimentary to his courage. But as there—

“Is no flock howsoever watched or tended,
But one dead lamb is there,—

so is there always to be found one truant in a school, one coward in a company. Few indeed of the Irish soldiers ever stooped “to waste a coward thought on life” when in action, but fewer still ever boasted of indifference about the dread uncertainty. True courage fears, but still faces the dreaded portal of eternity.

“’Tis not the brave man that feels no fear,
For that were stupid and irrational,
But he whose noble soul that fear subdues,
And bravely dares the danger nature shrinks from.”

But the unfortunate wretch was punished with sufficient vigour to convince him that obedience to orders was in his case the better part of valour. Carey stood over him like a chained lion, and never parted from his side until he saw him blazing away at where the continuous firing from the enemy’s rifles indicated their presence.

It was still quite dark, our battalion had gone, and the Irish Company, then reduced to about sixty-five rifles, was still behind upon the field of Montbelliard. It was evident the Germans hesitated to advance in the dark; they were not in sufficient force to press us that morning. Von Werder had already accomplished one of the most brilliant feats in the history of military warfare. He had succeeded in doing at Belfort

what Napoleon the First failed to do at Mantua. Von Werder had, with 45,000 men, held a position between the army of Bourbaki, numbering at least 100,000 men on one side, and had held in check the garrison of Belfort on the other. Like an old British Regiment in Egypt, Von Werder had placed his troops back to back, and succeeded with less than half the force of the attacking troops in beating off both. But it was not so much the men, as the means that accomplished this brilliant result. Individually the Frenchman is equal to any soldier in the world; in dash, in *esprit*, in gallant daring, in *élan*, in all that constitutes courage and enterprize, the Frenchman has no superior. In chivalrous conduct he even surpasses the man who stands to-day before the world as his conqueror. But shoeless, foodless, almost nude, with the clothes hanging in tattered fragments from their persons, the raw levies of *Mobiles* were unequal to the task of endurance which a demoralized *Intendance* asked them to encounter. It was even more than the troops of the regular army could bear. But day would soon be breaking, and we stole away while it was still dark, leaving the ghastly field behind, and taking the route indicated by our *Commandant*. But while yet in danger of attack, the men being out in skirmishing order, and making for the road, while we occasionally halted expecting to see again the dark blue uniforms of the German soldiers bursting through the gloom, a voice which I thought a familiar one, called out—in French of course—"Is that the *Régiment Étranger*?" For the instant I thought it might be a *ruse de guerre* of the enemy, and the men were down upon their knees,

every finger was upon a trigger, awaiting the order to fire, when the familiar voice sounded again, there was no mistaking its owner, it was our gallant old Colonel, whom we had left behind. Just then the earliest streaks of the coming day pierced the sombre envelope above, and I could trace deep thought upon the face of the fine old man as he came and walked beside me. He was visibly affected by some incident, and I anxiously asked him if he had been wounded.

"No, no, *Captaine*," he replied with a tone of sorrow which even perplexed me more, and then turning his handsome, battle-scarred face towards me, he continued: "I told your *Commandant* that I should remain behind with your company, *Capitaine*, and be the last away, and I tried to take a few hours' rest at the farm-house, which has been our headquarters for the last three days. You might have seen that it was not more than five hundred yards from the German lines, but so sheltered by the inequalities of ground as to be safe from the enemy's artillery. Well, you remember the officer you relieved yesterday on *tirailleur*."

"Yes, *mon Colonel*," I answered, "Trucho, or as we christened him, '*Garde la bombe*.'"

"Well, when we were attacked this morning, another officer and myself rushed from the house—the enemy was within twenty yards of us, but we tried to escape nevertheless, and as our figures were visible against the snow, the Germans fired at us, and I am here."

"And the other officer, *mon Colonel*," I said, now suspecting the truth, while the colonel shook his head, uttered the simple word '*Tué*,' mentioned a name, it was 'Trucho, poor, brave, much regretted '*Garde la bombe*.'"

Foodless, and in many cases shoeless, we commenced that disastrous retreat. The country around was devastated. Horseflesh had been for some days our only subsistence; neither bread nor wine could be had for any price. The woods and fields around Montbelliard were strewn with corpses, and every house had its wounded soldier.

Broken waggons, dismounted guns, dead and dying horses hacked to pieces by the passing troops, were everywhere to be seen. For about half-a-mile the dead men were as thick as berries, and not a few wounded, crawled into the shelter of the ditch, which, in too many cases, they probably never left alive. As if conscious of their approaching fate and our own position, they looked wildly at us as we passed along. Their distended countenances told of the mental agony they were enduring. The route we had passed four days ago full of hope and dreams of victory, we now re-passed, dispirited, and almost demoralized. Beneath us the little village of Dung nestled upon the border of a stream, and, as we crossed the bridge, we took up position to dispute the passage of the stream. The enemy shelled the woods behind us with their usual vigour. Their *eclaireurs* exchanged shots with us from the belt of timber that skirted the upper bank of the rising ground beyond the little river. Our colonel was still with us. The river was only fordable in one or two places, and if attacked we were to check their advance. We had an excellent position. The general of our division—Rebillard—left two mitrailleuses and two six-pounders to help in the defence of the stream, and said he entrusted them in our keeping

knowing that we would defend them "*à la mort.*" It was a glorious day. The genial atmosphere had already commenced to feel the reviving power of the new year's sun. Much of the frost had gone, and the air was warmer. The village of Dung where we halted, had a population of 381 souls, and the majority of the villagers took refuge in the woods and in the cellars, when they saw that we were prepared to dispute the possession of the place with the advancing foe.

A small inn stood beside the place allotted to *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, the door stood invitingly open, and I entered to try and buy or beg a drink of wine.

"Not a carafon, *Capitaine*," said the old man, who floundered about apparently in a state of mental torture, his deep set eyes and flurried countenance betraying the emotions he failed to express. "Everything I have in the world," continued the proprietor, "I buried under the three crosses you see outside the garden, and which I intend to make those piggish Germans believe have been erected over the remains of some soldiers who have been killed in the great battles of the last three days."

"We may be here an hour yet," I replied, "and you can make a harvest if you unearth your treasure and sell it to the officers, at your own price. I'll take twenty francs' worth for my own company to begin with."

"No, no," hurriedly answered the old man. "No, no; there, there, *mon Dieu, mon Dieu*, we shall be all killed," he almost screamed as a shell burst before the door, and I hurried out of the house expecting every minute to see the enemy burst through the timber in

our front. But the Germans were slow, very slow that morning. Had they pressed us in force, thousands of the dispirited troops would have fallen into their hands. However, as events proved, they had a better game on hands, and they left us to continue our disastrous retreat.

I think it was on the first day of our retreat that poor Sergeant Donnellan came to me and declared he could go no further. He was worn to a skeleton. His giant and splendidly proportioned figure was attenuated, and his handsome face was shrivelled, while his eyes protruded with a ravenous-looking expression. Dr. Macken had already told me that he feared it was all up with Donnellan. Hardened as men's hearts become in a rough campaign, I was moved to compassion by the wretched plight that gallant Irishman was in, as he stood before me during a short halt, and with soldierly grace, and ever prompt respect, brought his rifle to the "advance," and declared that he "could go no further." He had, as was customary, made a hole in his blanket, through which he put his head, and the folds of the shoddy covering fell over his shoulders, and gave him some little protection from the weather.

"Come, Donnellan, make another effort," I said, as he sat upon the bank beside the road, and I saw that the troops were about to move on again. "Come, old fellow, try again, just one more halt, and I'll do my best in the meantime to get you a lift."

"It is no use, Captain," he answered, every place is full, there is not the ghost of a chance of getting on either a mule or anything else, and I may as well give

up here," and he held out his hand to me in firm resolve. "Won't you write to my mother, Captain," he continued, after a moment's pause. Just then I saw a man taken out of one of the chairs, which was carried by the mules, and it was evident from the way the soldier was handled, that he was dead. I rushed over, and fortunately stumbled across Dr. Macken, through whose aid I succeeded in getting Donnellan into the vacant seat. But he did not appear to mind much whether he went or not, and as he was strapped in the place, and looked around with an expression which I interpreted to have a grave misgiving, whether or not he would ever see the morrow's sun. But the "fall in" was sounded, and the command "*en route*" given, and we were away once more. I remember turning round to see if I could distinguish the gallant sergeant amidst the ruck of carts, and waggons, and mule teams, and I remember waving him an adieu, which he courteously returned. Poor fellow! I never saw him again, and he must have died of exhaustion, or rapid consumption, brought on by hardships. Every man in the Company had respect for Donnellan. He was the *beau-ideal* of a chivalrous man. He was a Bayard in his way, and what was left of *La Compagnie* regretted the loss of his soldierly exploits. It fell into one of my dreamy moods, and I thought long, and if I speculated upon how a poor lady in Galway would bear the sad tidings of her son's fate, and found time amidst the trials of that retreat, to tender a sympathetic feeling of respect for her sorrow, it was but the natural outpour of my respect towards a man whom I was proud

to often call my friend. Fate had been unkind to Anthony Donnellan, but withal I could not help asking myself "was France worthy of such a sacrifice?" Even the honours he won upon the hard-fought field of Orleans, he never received. The cross which should have decorated his breast he never got, while Gambetta with prodigal hand distributed decorations to many a carpet hero of the Republic. But as a quaint old New England primer says with simple force—

"Xerxes did die,
And so must I."

The dead past buries its dead very quickly in this world of ours, and amidst the excitement of a campaign, the dead past is soon forgotten.

But we should hurry on, for Von Werder's cavalry occasionally pressed upon our rear. The 20th and 21st corps were already two days' march before ours. They had passed the fortifications of Besançon, and were in full swing for Lyons. But it was then that Manteuffel came down upon our broken and dispirited troops, and drove them across the Swiss frontier. He accomplished, perhaps, one of the grandest achievements of the war. He came from the east of France to assist Von Werder in his resistance against Bourbaki. He saw the position of the two armies with that quickness that distinguished the German commanders during the campaign. Bourbaki had hoped that Garibaldi, with his corps of Republican Volunteers at Dijon, could check the advance of the German commanders coming from the east. Dijon stood directly before the German troops. In the

hands of an able commander the garrison could have seriously impeded the German advance, and saved the French troops. But Manteuffel measured his man. He left a small force to look after Dijon, and hurried on himself to overwhelm the dispirited and defeated French. He succeeded to the letter. He blocked the retreat to Lyons, and forced the famished soldiery of the Republic into neutral territory, and the 20th and 21st corps were huddled pell-mell across the border.

But our turn was coming. Von Werder was too much weakened to follow us with vigour, for he should still press on the siege of Belfort, the gallant little garrison of which held out with persistent vigour. For four days, however, that desperate retreat was continued. The men were falling away in batches, but the Irish Company held together with much perseverance. Their distinct nationality induced the men to keep intact. If they fell out they would be more completely lost than a Frenchman. But my pen fails to describe the hardships of that retreat. It was simply horrible. I would not like to see an Irish dog endure as much again. Men will, of course, risk life and limb for the bubble reputation, but to endure all the hardships of a winter-running campaign in a cold climate, is an undertaking which every man should well consider, before voluntarily encountering. An officer can always make ends meet, but for the rank and file, it is another affair. It would damp the ardour of many a would-be hero if he could have seen the Irish Company on their retreat from Montbelliard, or if some enterprising photographer had taken a

proof of the shoeless, foodless, and starved creatures they at that time were, as they shuffled on, over hill and dale, on the 20th of January, 1871.

CHAPTER XVII.

"O suffering, sad humanity!
O ye afflicted ones, who lie
Steeped to the lips in misery,
Longing, and yet afraid to die,
Patient, though sorely tried!"

LONGFELLOW.

In the meantime the disasters which befel the armies of France were irreparable. The army of Bourbaki had been destroyed, and Paris was giving indications of the coming surrender. A sortie on the 19th of January had been repulsed. Montretout was captured by a gallant effort of the besieged, but had to be abandoned. General Faidherbe was defeated at St. Quentin on the same day, and all hopes of relieving Paris from the north was at an end. The war was practically over, and France was subdued. There might still, indeed, be some desultory fighting in positions favourable for defence, some more blood might flow from the already bleeding combatants, but organized resistance was at an end, and the nation recognized the fact. There were, indeed, a few men insane enough to think that France might still fight on, but these were interested speculators, who traded upon the blood of their countrymen. Men who wit-

nessed and encountered the hardships of the campaign knew that the game was up. For us, we might be compelled to fight again, but already speculations were rife as to an armistice, which we knew was but the prelude of a necessary and humiliating peace. As we retreated through the beautiful country watered by the Doubs, over hill and through dale, in wet and cold, dropping with fatigue, and exhausted by suffering, I could not help speculating that to man alone is left a power of endurance which the beasts of the field could scarcely endure. But we had four hard days on that desperate retreat—days of famine, of cold, of hunger, and of danger; from early dawn until long after dark, it was a trial of speed, and then but little repose could be found on the slimy soil, torn up with thousands of horses and waggons, and the tramp of tens of thousands of men. Everywhere we had to sleep was converted into an ocean of mud; and yet men will live on, except here and there scattered amongst the regiments, some unfortunate ends his career by sending a bullet through his distracted brain. But the retreat continued through Roulens and Baume-les-Dames, and on the night of the fourth day our advance guard was working through a defile in the Vosges, about eight miles from Besançon, and just beside the little village of Busy, when the astonished soldiers were stopped by the German challenge "*Wer-da-is?*" sounding upon their ears. We were surrounded! I think that was on the 23rd of January, and I well remember how indifferently the troops accepted the challenge, as most of us would rather fight than march any further. On that day we had been

on foot from six in the morning until nine in the evening, marching at a break-neck pace, and it was without exception the most harassing day we had spent in France.

"We are in for it again, Captain," said Sergeant Carey, coming and standing by my side, his iron frame, of all the men of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, presenting the least trace of the misery he had endured. "And I am glad of it," he continued, "this retreating makes a man hungry, and I should like to exchange haversacks and boots with some of these friendly Germans before us." Carey's boots were indeed a study in their way. Originally they were too small for him, and he was compelled to squeeze his feet into their narrow limits. Without socks, and being incessantly on the march, he was unable to guard against painful and ugly sores which formed upon his feet in consequence. Then he resorted to the expedient of cutting the shoes in order to remove the pressure, and give him ease. The frost penetrated the sores, caused them to fester, and protrude out of the limits of the orifice, and ultimately to present a sight from which even hardened soldiers turned in pity. On one occasion he attempted to take his shoes off, and the efforts he made would have killed many a less determined man. At last, however, he succeeded, but as he often told me, "I looked down, sir, and saw my feet swelling so quickly, that unless I put my shoes on at once, I would have to go barefooted." But he had to cut his shoes in order to get them on, and they became even worse than before. Yet Carey was as full of life and

merriment as ever, and as he bustled about executing some orders for the better disposition of the Company, no trace of the agony he was enduring was visible in his soldierly bearing.

That night we bivouacked behind the shelter of a friendly wall. It was bitterly cold. M'Alevey was trying to be gay, and almost failed. He had been hit with the splinter of a shell, and the wound had lamed him a little. But he did not mind it. Mr. Cotter was on duty, and the Doctor, M'Alevey, with myself, huddled together under an *auberge* made of a few twigs, with a piece of canvas thrown over it. The Doctor had finished telling us about a poor wretch that had carried the heel of a shell, a piece of iron about three pounds weight, in his stomach, for half an hour, in intense agony, and pictured the piteous appeals of the poor fellow as he begged the Doctor to kill him. He had just finished, when he turned somewhat abruptly towards me :

"But stay," he said, looking at a 'green stone' that hung from my watch-chain; "I often noticed this peculiar oblong stone you wear, Captain; what is it?"

"It is a 'green stone,'" I replied. "I got it in New Zealand, where it is highly prized by the natives. I bought it from a chief named 'Ashapenny'."

"Ashapenny," quizzically repeated the doctor.

"Yes, Ashapenny," I replied. By the way, my first meeting with Ashapenny was rather an odd one. It was at a place called Waiukue, at the head of the Manukau harbour.

"Orderly, pile on a few more logs," broke in

M'Alevey. "We are going to have a yarn from the Captain. Now then spin away."

"I assure you," I expostulated.

"Of course, you assure us. Never mind. I'll be dumb," and he made a motion of semi-somnolence.

"I assure you," I repeated, "that every word of what I am going to tell you is true. It is nothing marvelous, and not half as remarkable as the events which are every day occurring around it. But to my story. In 1864 I was in New Zealand, and in the Christmas of that year I found myself at the place I previously mentioned, the village of Waiukue, at the head of the Manukau harbour. There were only five or six houses in the village at that time, and a block house into which it was customary to assemble the people of the neighbourhood when the Maories were around. The country was undulating, liberally interspersed with wood and water, and dotted here and there with a homestead. The Waikato campaign was then nearly over, but the natives were still troublesome, and they kept the Waiukue Volunteers constantly on the move. They had been quartered in the block house for a day or two, when one morning I saw an old friend named Dunn coming towards me, and holding out his hand in joyous salutation. Dunn had been in the 63rd, and was then commanding a company of volunteers that he brought from Australia. He was always a wag, when in the service and when out of it, and he is a wag to-day. After we had run through our catalogue of enquiries about old friends and the disasters which had befallen some of them, we saw a majestic-looking native coming towards us. He

was dressed half savage, half European. His garment was a white shirt, which descended below his knees. Around his waist he wore a sergeant's sash, and around his neck he had a black silk necktie, carelessly tied under the chin. His face was deeply tattooed, and the dark blue curvatures traced deep channels along his swarthy countenance. His head was surmounted with dyed flax, and in his hair he wore an eagle's feather. He wore boots, but his legs and arms were bare, while a matting of bird's feathers was tied over his left shoulder, and fell to his knees.

"'Now, Kirwan,' said Dunn, as the Maori approached, 'do you know any of the language, eh?'"

"'Not a word,'" I replied.

"'Well, then, bid this fellow 'good morning' by saying 'Herekawa, mongo, mongo, typho.''"

"The Maori was by this time within speaking distance, and was about to pass quietly upon his way, for he was of a friendly tribe, when I saluted with my 'Herekawa, mongo, mongo, typho,' and I shall never forget the stern and scornful glance the native quickly turned upon me, while Dunn burst out laughing, and I saw at a glance that I had been sold. The Maori passed on, and were it not for 'auld acquaintance' sake I would have reported the circumstance. But Dunn was too good a fellow to quarrel with, and just to tease me the more it was an hour before he told me that I had said 'Go away, you black devil.'"

"'It was not right,' indignantly ejaculated M'Alevey.

"Well, Dunn made up for it afterwards by inducing that same Maori, who was the chief Ashapenny, to sell

me this green stone, for which I paid a sum of money in excess of its value.

" 'Was that long after,' asked my second lieutenant.

" On the first occasion of my visit to the native village," I answered, " the natives were having a hakari or banquet, and we were invited to be present. Around the village square pyramidal towers, having an elevation of fifty feet, extended for fully a mile towards the belt of encircling evergreens which hemmed in the semicircle of cultivated land, and each of those towers were filled with articles of food in preparation for this great hakari. Sweet potatoes, taros, maize, fern-root, potted birds, dried fish, karaka berries, and other things were in store. The landscape was not soft or gay, but was grand and sombre. The trees were evergreens, and the palm-like ferns, the nikaw, and the obscure green flowers of the cryptogamic ferns, growing in profuse abundance, gave a somewhat tropical appearance to the luxuriant vegetation. It was, as I told you, Christmas, and the beautiful pohutukana was covered with scarlet flowers, and the melancholy bimu looked beautiful. The celebrated kauri was thickly intermingled with less valuable trees, and the milky-coloured gum oozed from its sides and enriched the already rich soil around its base. I could see that the natives were preparing for the war dance, as well as for the hakari, and I gladly availed myself of a seat from which I could get a good view of the mad frolic that was to take place. We were hospitably received, although Ashapenny did not come near us. Yet two of the chiefs of the village held the head of each of our horses as we dismounted, and this was

considered the highest compliment they could pay us. Suddenly the men forming the circle of sitting Maories started to their feet. For the moment I thought that we had been betrayed, and my companion, Dunn, and myself drew our revolvers, but we were laughed at for our alarm. After running about twenty yards, the mass of men, perhaps four hundred in all, placed themselves in lines, ten or even twenty deep. Then, with weapons in their hands, each man elevated his right leg and right side of the body.

"You laugh M'Alevey," I broke in, as my lieutenant held his sides and roared, "but 'tis true as holy writ."

"Then, like a flash of lightning, they jumped two feet from the ground, brandishing and cleaving the air with their weapons—either white pine spear, hocroa, violin-shaped patu, or the favourite adze-like toki, yelling a loud chorus the while. Every muscle quivered during the exciting work; the gaping mouths, inflated nostrils, distorted faces, out-hanging tongues, and fixed staring eyes, too truly told of the success of the maddening work. The fury of the demon appeared to possess them all. Again and again the wild work was repeated. A dance of the Inferno could not be more demoniacal. The maddened men, inciting each other, to perserve order in the host, sang a sort of war song, which might be thus translated:

"Hug close,
Au, au,
Fling out [meaning the legs],
Au, au,

That may flee
Away the seal
To a distance
In order to gaze
This way, -
Yes, yes, yes."

"And the dancers became so frantic in their wild, maddening work, that even Ashapenny could not arrest the passionate display; it should die like the exhausted flame of a burning totaro tree, leaving only its embers.

"It was a wild, exciting scene, and it took some time before the natives had recovered from its effect and returned to their 'wares,' or huts, to rest. It was now nine o'clock, and we had six miles to ride to Waiukue. The natives pressed us to remain, and offered to place the best accommodation they had in the village at our service. But we had almost determined to return, as Captain Dunn expected despatches early next morning. At last Ashapenny himself came to us, and with gracious and forgiving courtesy wished us to remain. We could not resist so much hospitality, displayed, too, to men who had gratuitously insulted him. But a full explanation soon followed; I was cleared from all blame and Dunn manfully apologized, and the affair ended."

"'Is that all,' said M'Alevey. 'No blood and thunder.'

"None whatever," I answered.

"'But you saw something in that way in New Zealand. What are their Pahs like?' he asked.

"The first I saw was at this village, and there were

two, one of modern and the other of more ancient construction.

"The latter flanked the narrow neck of land that was almost surrounded by a creek close by. It was upon the summit of a hill, and was erected upon the old pattern. There were the double rows of fences on the unprotected sides, the inner fence being fully twenty-five feet high, and formed of poles stuck in the ground, which were closely bound together with supplejack withes and tartoro creepers. The outer fence was only six feet high, and was constructed of lighter material. Between the two there was a dry ditch. Exaggerated wooden figures of men, with gaping mouths and out-hanging tongues, were stuck in the fences, and gave a fetish appearance to the entire stockade. At each corner stages were erected for the sentinels, and the keen-eyed Maories walked up and down with a slinging gait, yet carefully trained senses of sight and sound. Suspended by cords from an elevated stage hung a wooden gong twelve feet long, somewhat canoe-shaped, and, when struck with a wooden mallet, it emitted a sound which may be heard twenty miles off in still weather. But the other pah was of modern construction. It commanded an angle made by two bush tracks, and a rifle-pit five feet deep surrounded the structure. A bell supplied the place of a gong, and loop-holes and flanking angles show that it was constructed by men of modern experience, or warriors of wisdom. The joints of the stockade were closer, and had evidently been turned out by some weapons or instruments made by civilized men.

"That night, however, we slept in the Maori village,

and early next morning started for Waiukue. Our route lay through a thick belt of timber, and as it was summer time we enjoyed the early ride in the first flush of daybreak.

"There was a pleasure in treading those pathless woods, where generations of noble trees were seen decaying, and fresh generations rising up around the moss-covered trunks of fallen patriarchs. There was a profound silence reigning in those regions which produced a pleasing gloom on the mind, and the surrounding scenery displayed, better than the most classic architecture, the grandeur of repose. Sound there was none, save now and again the shrill screech of a parrot pierced the still air, or some giant tree, bending beneath the weight of ages as it sank to death wailing its agony in its fall. Around the graves of generations of trees the air was hushed into stillness, while the tops of the living generations were agitated with gentle gales from the South Pacific Ocean.

"In the forest man is never alone. It is upon the prairie, with a vast oceanless desert, without a landmark or a bound, it is there a man feels as if the world does not belong to him nor he to the world. But there, in the depth of a New Zealand forest, there was a communion of pious thoughts, every flower had its lesson, every stream and every bower had its story, every herb which we pressed beneath our feet, if rightly understood, appealed by some magic of its own 'to Hope, to Holiness, and God.' The sun's rays only here and there penetrated the dense foliage, except upon the margin of the rivers which traversed the soft, green landscape beyond. Numerous cicadæ made loud

and incessant grating sounds upon the ear, and the owls and bats still fluttered about our heads in close but unheeded proximity as we rode along.

"The morning sun had already fringed the horizon before we were yet half way to Waiukue. The sky was beautifully dotted with clouds of varied hue, blending into each other with that artistic finish which nature alone can produce. It appeared like waves of gold, green, and purple, rolling with easy and gentle swells into scarlet, orange and blue. A storm cloud had just passed away, and, 'like a hooded friar, told its beads in drops of rain.'

"Dunn was full of information. He had been some years in the colony, and he passed the time in telling me of eventful times of flood and field through which he had passed. He had been at the Rangatere Pah, where our troops suffered so terribly from the fusilade of the entrenched Maories. He told me how Maui, the native chief, first fished the island from the ocean; how he caught the sun and beat it for scorching up the grass; of the 'hougi,' or meeting of friends, who salute by rubbing noses

"But there is nothing odd in that, for the Greeks of old saluted by pressing their chins together; the Turks join the forehead and eyes; the Moors kiss beards; the Arabs, the eyes; and Joab saluted Amasa by holding his beard and kissing. He told me of the Maori gods Atua, and the gods of the forests, and of the birds, Tone Mathuta, of the wonderful lake district around Rotorua and Rotomahana, where magnificent geysers abound and terraces are formed by the silicious deposits from the boiling water; of the 'runongos' or assem-

blies; and when a good hour had passed the block house at Waiukue was in view, and we were soon within its walls."

" 'I expected some hairbreadth escapes every moment,' said M'Alevey, when I had finished, 'and I am disgusted accordingly. Throw on some more timber, orderly, while I retire thankful, but not satisfied with your story, Captain. You might have killed a Maori or two, just to season the events you are after relating.' "

"Good night," I answered, anxious to escape to my tent, where I found a luxurious bed of leaves, upon which was placed my sheepskin bag, into which I quickly thrust myself, and, after saying my short, nightly prayer, I was soon asleep.

I was awakened the following morning by the rattle of musketry which was well sustained in front of the village of Bussy, and the adjoining village of Ornans, the next morning. Behind the enemy's lines the Doubs coursed merrily along; the wily Germans, however, having constructed a "bridge-head," or *tête-de-pont* to cover their retreat, if that unusual resource was found necessary. Just at the re-entering sinuosity of the river they constructed the work, in order to enable the guns to play in harmony with the supporting batteries on the other side. Openings were left to allow the retreating troops to file through with guns and carriages without confusion, and the parapets were so disposed as to flank those openings effectually. But retreat for them did not become necessary. They had the game in their own hands. They played the attack, we the defence. Bussy was

hastily barricaded; the houses were crenelated, banquettes were made, and our mountain-pieces so disposed as to defend those parts most favourable to an advance of the enemy. Yet everything was bungled. I was commanded to occupy a position which was contrary to all military rule. The Irish Company was to hold the "last ditch." After the village was won by the enemy we were to stand behind the last brick edifice in the place, and there to check their advance, in order to enable the battalion to escape over the fields to our rear. Behind our position there was a stretch of unbroken ground, across which we would be compelled to fly. There was no shelter on our way. If the enemy won our position, which we regarded as a matter of certainty, they would have picked us off at their leisure as we were making across the open space behind us. Nor was there any disposition made to cover us, either with artillery or musketry fire. Once the village was won, the Germans could line the outer works, fire from the houses with security to themselves, but certainly with discomfort to us. But it was not so to be. The blunder was averted. The order was countermanded, for we were wanted in the front. The musketry fire was meantime rolling along the line, while we traversed the streets of Bussy, moving towards the other end of the village where our troops were engaged. In our direct front nothing could be seen of the enemy but the smoke from their small arms, and which was the only mark for our troops to aim at. It was a game of "hide and seek." Our men fired at where they *thought* the Germans were, or where the

smoke from their guns indicated their position. Occasionally, indeed, a soldier more imprudent than his companions, would expose his person, and receive half-a-dozen bullets through his body as a recompense for his hardihood. But fire answered fire, and the leaden shower battered against the wall, or buried itself in the ditches, behind which our troops were sheltered. The bullets fell thick and fast around the men, when, with their accustomed tactics, the enemy sought to gain our flank, and compel us to retire. At this time our line extended over the hill upon our left, where some *chasseurs à pied* were engaged in defending the wood through which the enemy threatened our flank. Between us there was an open space, across which no enemy could prudently attempt to move, and we retreated through the village and sought the hills, which skirted the village on flank and rear. The Germans had driven us out of Bussy. We now made for the high ground behind the village. The Irish Company was sheltered behind an "*auberge*," when General Rebillard rode along the post, escorted by a troop of lancers, while he endeavoured to map out our new line before the enemy too closely pressed upon our position.

"What regiment are you?" the General demanded, pulling up before our post, looking indifferently at the guard that had turned out to do him honour.

"*La Compagnie Irlandaise, Régiment Etranger, mon General*," I answered.

"Ah," I have heard of you replied the General, with an approving smile, while he more keenly looked at the line of Irishmen who stood before him, and a

welcome Irish cheer caused our French companies to stare in amazement at what they, no doubt, considered the frantic conduct of the Irish soldiers.

But the enemy were drawing their lines still closer upon our position. They knew they had us trapped, yet they even more effectually guarded every outlet by which we could escape. Our division had retired under the guns of the fortress and the outlying forts of Besançon. We were still the rear-guard of the army. To us was left the honour of checking the German advance. Even the other two battalions of our regiment had retired and left us up nearest the enemy's lines. The country was admirably adapted for defensive operations. Belts of timber cut the hills into divisions, and gave good cover to our troops. Before us the Doubs still murmured on its way, until its waters met the more turbid current of the Rhone. Upon a rocky eminence, in our direct front, the shell of what was once a baronial castle stood out sharp and clear against the cloudless sky. The people in the neighbourhood told weird stories about the Chateau and its once powerful inhabitants. Time was when the proprietors of this once strong dwelling exacted black mail from the travellers through the valley of the Vosges, and gnomes and ghosts of defunct cavaliers, it was said still trod the deserted chambers of the ruined building. Along the outer boundary of the structure, might still be seen the spirits of the departed dead, moving with majestic mien through the amply wainscotted hall which so often echoed to the tread of a hundred gentlemanly desperadoes. The form of a female, too, was—

"At twilight seen to glide,
Smiling o'er the fatal tide"

of the river that still kept coursing on, ever on, to the sea. To the country people around the old castle was a tabooed spot, not to be desecrated by the foot of man. Immediately opposite the ruined castle, but divided by a deep ravine, through which the German commanders advanced their men, the enemy had a post of observation, which took in a range of our new position, and enabled them to distribute their troops, so as to effectually block us under the guns of Besançon. The German outposts pressed us on all sides. For some days we occupied a wood in front of the German outposts. The foliage of the trees was strewn upon the ground, and formed a gorgeous bed for all that remained of the wearied soldiers of the *Armée de l'Est*. As usual we lined the skirt of the timber, in order to give a clear sweep for our guns in the event of attack. But reaction set in again. The rattle of musketry no longer kept the men from drooping with exhaustion. Sergeant M'Crossin became emaciated. I scarcely ever saw such a deplorable and famine-stricken man. His eyes protruded from their sockets, while the bones nearly cut through the remnant of flesh that was left upon his face and person. He was tottering with weakness, and at last his limbs refused to obey the effort of his will. He was, too, afflicted with smallpox. Yet, even then, under the damp air of January, stretched upon the moisture preserving leaves of pine trees, almost naked, with "famine" written upon every lineament of his features, the brave fellow refused to go to hospital because we were likely to be engaged

any moment. I had to command him to leave the field, and as his emaciated figure disappeared behind the thickly matted saplings which abundantly interlaced our encampment, I thought I had seen the last of my *fourrier-sergent*.

"Another good man gone," said Mr. M'Alevey, when M'Crossin and his escort had disappeared. "Poor fellow, it is hardly possible that he can pull through, for he is already half dead; but *mais a la guerre, comme a la guerre*," and the lieutenant gave an additional twist to his well trimmed moustache, lit a cigarette, and was soon enveloped in a cloud of smoke.

In the meantime the enemy had been feeling our position on all sides. They pressed our outposts, and their advance-guards had continual encounters with our troops. The rattle of musketry was rolling along our entire front. They still hesitated to occupy, although they had compelled us to retire from, Bussy. The slopes of the hill, the edges of the timber, the sheltered ditches, every available and protected position was occupied by our men, while the Germans tried on all sides to outflank our lines, or to drive the flanks in confusion in upon the centre. There was, indeed, but little or no exposure on either side, but the Germans were manœuvring through every inch of ground before us. For five or six days we lay in the same position. Our grand guard and the outposts of the enemy were constantly engaged. Our men had meantime become still more reduced in numbers. *La Compagnie Irlandaise* could only muster fifty-five rifles under the trees in front of the German position before Bussy. The casualties from the bullets of the

enemy were few, but famine had reduced our ranks to nearly half its original strength. But the end came at last! Our troops retired closer still to the fortifications. Behind our position every hill had suddenly been capped with field works. To our battalion was left the honour of being the last to retire. We were still left nearest the German lines. The wood was vacated, and a commanding position taken upon the summit of a hill about four hundred yards in our rear. We had lost our *Commandant* the day after Montbelliard, and our new Chief was more strict in his attention to the letter of military law. Our new post commanded the village of Bussy, and our outposts occupied the adjoining wood. But the duty was severe. It was a continual round of grand guard and picket, picket and grand-guard. Every morning, an hour before daybreak, the battalion turned out and formed in front of our position, prepared for an attack. Even the poor comfort of a night's uninterrupted repose upon the damp soil was denied the men. Rumours of an armistice had reached us, and the fall of Paris was generally believed. In other parts of France the Celt and the Teuton faced each other in grim quietude, the hush of arms was stilled, the shock of battle was over, the record of blood was nearly full. Peace, at least for a while, settled upon the unhappy homesteads of France, and the armistice brought mingled feelings of joy and sorrow to every creature's heart. But it was not so for us. We were to fight on. The Germans refused to grant us the luxury of an armistice; they thought we should be destroyed. Three days after the ring of

the rifle had ceased in other parts of France, the troops of Manteuffel again advanced to the attack upon our position.

I think it was on the 2nd of February that we were aroused from our comparative lethargy, by the shout of "*aux armes ! aux armes !*" ringing along our line. The ring of a rifle always rouses the latent spirit of soldiers. The men who, after the long and trying marches which followed their retreat from Montbéliard, were scarcely able to draw their weary limbs along, suddenly became possessed of an *élan* which nothing but being face to face with the foe could inspire. On this day, however, we were destined to see this *élan* fully developed. Before our position a line of *tirailleurs* was irregularly, and as I thought, imprudently disposed in an open space, which could be enfiladed from a position which could be easily carried by the enemy. Our left was protected by a country-house called the "Red Farm," while on our right a battery of six-pounders gave some security to our position in that direction. A battery of mountain pieces crowned the height upon which the main portion of the battalion was posted, and the Irish Company was placed behind a well-protected swell in the ground. Out of our entire division the 5th battalion of the *Régiment Etranger* was still nearest the enemy's line.

The Uhlans scoured the neighbourhood, and came with gallant impudence within two hundred yards of our lines. They had to feel the way for the attacking force. From out some well-sheltered bushes, however, into which many of our skirmishers had made their way,

a smart fusilade was opened on the advancing horsemen, saddles were emptied, and the remainder turned and fled, madly pressing on each other as they scampered away. But they advanced again with recruited ranks, and cautiously moved in detachments towards every place likely to conceal our men. They rode with easy grace, and sat their horses like true soldiers. But many a brave fellow for the last time spurred his charger onwards, as from out the sheltered slopes of bush and brake our men sent volley after volley into the advancing squadrons. Horses and riders rolled upon the earth, saddles were emptied, and riderless steeds rushed frantically over the plain sniffing the air with wide distended nostrils. Then the small arms came into play, and the *musique de la guerre* was for a while merrily sustained. In the meantime our left was threatened and we were compelled to change the position of our troops in that direction to meet the tactics of the enemy. The field guns of the Germans had by this time come into position. Our pieces were admirably disposed upon an elevated platform beside the "Red Farm," and as the head of the enemy's infantry column wound its way through the streets of Bussy, making towards our lines, the first *obus* was sent upon its mission. It was a splendid shot! The shell cut a clear and well-defined lane through the German lines and caused a gap in their ranks. They were evidently unprepared for such good practice, but they quickly closed up,

"Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell."

They then advanced rapidly in open order, to gain some cover in their front the while. We had meanwhile become engaged, as the enemy pressed closer upon our position. The rattle of small arms was by this time vigorously sustained on both sides. The Germans hesitated to advance across the open space that divided them from our lines, while we were satisfied with holding our own without attempting to dislodge the foe, while they tried to gain our flank upon the left, they were met by a well-directed fire from the shelter of a friendly ditch which checked their advance and left us staring at one another in grim and anxious determination. The groans of the wounded were already audible amidst the din of the combat, when suddenly from out the wood upon our right a troop of the enemy's dragoons charged upon our line of *tirailleurs* and threatened to ride over them. But our men quickly rallied by fours and successfully resisted the onslaught, while the number of dismounted troopers told how steadily the men of the *Régiment Etranger* had done their work.

But the enemy still pressed upon us. They won position after position in spite of all our efforts. The plain still divided us. One portion of the open space was not more than one hundred yards across, and it was supposed that it was at that point they would in all probability attempt to cross in order to carry our post at the point of the bayonet. We were not mistaken in our conjecture. Another and a more formidable attempt to turn our left flank was an indication of their intention, and just as they made some slight advance to success upon our left, the troops in

gain some
meanwhile
oser upon
as by this
e Germans
at divided
sified with
slodge the
on the left,
the shelter
dvance and
d anxious
nded were
abat, when
a troop of
r line of
. But our
ly resisted
ismounted
o Régiment

They won
orts. The
open space
oss, and it
would in
carry our
were not
d a more
s an indi-
ade some
troops in

front rushed out from under the shelter of the trees and made straight for our lines. It was a wild, exciting moment. Many a gallant fellow bit the dust in that short run. Their officers led them on with chivalrous daring, and again that stirring "Vorwärts, vorwärts," sounded upon our ears. Again, too, we heard the exciting command, "*a la bayonet, a la bayonet.*" We all jumped to our feet, the bayonets of the French and Germans glittered in the sunshine, and in another instant would have been reeking with each other's blood. But the record was full, the cup had overflowed. With a singular and, indeed melo-dramatic effect, a horseman bearing a white flag, was seen riding furiously towards the combatant lines. It was a message of peace! Every lip uttered the cry of "*Drapeau blanc, drapeau blanc.*" The shout was carried along the line, the combat ceased, and then louder than ever was heard the thankful sentence "*Drapeau blanc, drapeau blanc.*" All eyes were turned towards the trooper and his white flag. "*Cessez le feu, cessez le feu,*" rang out the bugles, "*Cessez le feu, cessez le feu,*" shouted the officers in command, and in a few minutes the strife had ceased, the harvest of death was at an end, and the white flag with all its peaceful significance waved above the victor and the vanquished.

And the troops were thankful. They may have experienced the sad reflections of a lost cause, but there was that sudden release from danger which pleases all men. To a soldier there is nothing so pleasant as the feelings he experiences after a fight in which he has done his duty.

Soon afterwards, however, there was a *parlementaire*, and then we heard that the armistice had been extended to us, and we might rest in peace.

"Well, *Capitaine*," said our *Commandant* to me during the evening, "the war is probably over, and to our battalion remains the honor of having fired what was probably the last shot. When you return to Ireland it may be something to remember." And so it is! We cannot forget that if we were late in the field we were last out of it, and we treasure it as one of the most satisfactory of our reminiscences that we heard the last shot and saw the last Germans fall during the Franco-German war of 1870 and 1871.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility."

SHAKESPEARE.

The beginning of February, 1871, brought mingled feelings of joy and sorrow into the homes of the people of France. Around many a hearthstone national humiliation must have been more than compensated for by the assurance that the darling son or brother had survived the bloody campaign, while many a home was shadowed over by the dim, cold shade of death. Yes, the love of kind is, in the old at least, stronger than the love of country. There are few Spartan mothers, although there may be many Spartan sons, in those days. Preach as we may about devotion to country, let the manhood of a nation pronounce as it will its

willingness to sacrifice life in its country's cause, yet the parents of that nation's manhood would, unlike the Spartan mothers, rather see their sons return *without* their shields than *upon* them. As we grow old that patriotic fire which animated us in our youth gives way to a more temperate spirit; we may still be truly patriotic, but it is a patriotism of a different stamp from the sacrificing and generous impulse which possessed us in our youth. Passion gives way to reason, and the hero of the past becomes the cautious counsellor of the present. The old are seldom brave. Even Napoleon, the man who, as a youth, was the first to cross the bloody bridge of Lodi, when his grenadiers hesitated to advance, was, in his latter days, not free from the imputation of being careful to preserve his anatomy entire. As we advance in life the love of existence and the cares and responsibilities of age in a great measure deaden all other feelings. The thousands of associations and family ties which age conjures up and creates, make it harder for the old to leave the world than for the youth whose ties are but the creation of yesterday, and whose plans or prospects in the future are in all cases but indifferently arranged. The youthful soldier, full of patriotism, alive with animation, and buoyed up by the hope of returning to the paternal roof with all his new-born honours thick upon his head, falls, and there is an end to all his greatness; but the parents survive but to sanctify his death, and to carry along with them the sorrowing recollection of his end. Yes, they are the real victims of the war! Amidst the excitement of a campaign soldiers have little time for

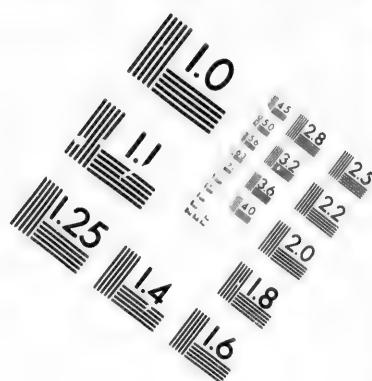
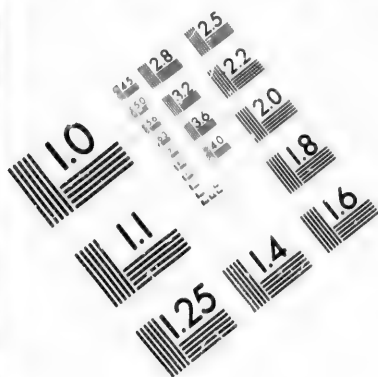
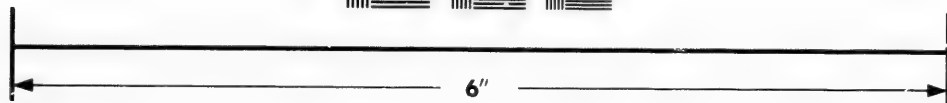
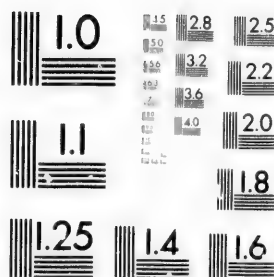
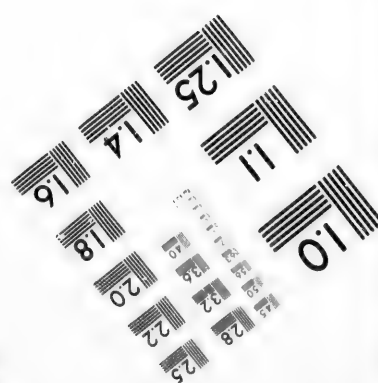


IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)

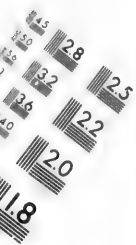


6"



Photographic
Sciences
Corporation

23 WEST MAIN STREET
WEBSTER, N.Y. 14580
(716) 872-4503



reflection, while their parents and relatives think of nothing but the dangers which are attendant upon the war, and are forever speculating and praying for the absent ones. But the armistice enabled all to speculate on meeting old friends again, and an order from the General of our division soon after released many of the soldiers from their engagement, and brought with it associations of lost companions and the recollections of a lost cause.

“ARMY OF THE EAST.

“DIVISIONAL ORDER.

“*Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Soldiers:*

“A decision of the Administration obliges many amongst you to return home. Before their departure, I am anxious to express to them the deep regret I feel at parting with them.

“If, since Coulmiers, success has not followed our arms, you have not the less continued to show an example of courage, discipline and devotion. During the retreat upon Orleans, in presence of a great force, the Second Division of the Fifteenth Army Corps distinguished itself by courage and coolness while defending Arteney, Chevilly, and afterwards the heights of Montjoie, on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of December.

“Your conduct in the East does you the highest honor. You have bivouacked on the snow when the thermometer marked fifteen degrees below zero, often without fire, and sometimes without provisions, in consequence of the unavoidable delay of the convoys.

‘At Mont-Chevis (Montbelliard), you stood up

bravely for three days under the murderous fire of a powerful artillery.

"You fought before Bussy to cover the fatal movement of the army upon Pontarlier.

"During the armistice you cut out a new line of defence before Besançon to supplement the insufficient fortifications of that place.

"*Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and Soldiers of the Second Division:*

"I shall ever remember, with pride and happiness, that I have had the honour of marching with you against the enemy for a period of five months.

"Under the grievous circumstances in which our country is plac'd, endeavour to maintain order, and guard the national dignity in presence of the foreigner who is to occupy our soil until we can take revenge.

"(Signed),

"REBILLARD,

"*General of Division.*

"General Headquarters, Berne, (near Besançon),

"MARCH 9TH, 1871."

Day by day it was evident that the armistice brought joy to the troops. *La Compagnie Irlandaise* was still quartered at the Red Farm, and were able at last to rest and be thankful. The weather became warm, and the sun, as if in gladdened splendour, shone with redoubled vigour. The troops occupied their time when off duty by sewing their tattered garments and putting their worn and dilapidated kits in order. Books were posted, accoutrements polished, and all the appurtenances of camp life underwent a

vigorous overhauling. The men were looking themselves again, and their home-bound fancies ran riot in speculation. Everywhere around us the sword was turned into the ploughshare; the cavalry horses were working on the farms and preparing the productive soil for another crop of cereals or grapes.

Yet the men were not idle all the time. Every hill around Besançon was converted into a fortress. Fatigue parties were constantly at work, and the Irish soldiers had some good opportunities of learning the mysteries of the sappers' art. Walls and trenches were made, barricades and banquettes were constructed in the villages of the neighbourhood, and the troops in general were preparing for a renewal of hostilities which we all knew would not occur. However, the Irish soldiers soon became expert with the pick and shovel. It was an agreeable change; constructing lunettes, redoubts, bastions and demi-bastions, curtains, gorges and rifle-pits, was, after all, better than the misery which was attendant upon our experience under Bourbaki. Gabions for revetments, mantlets for guns, platforms for gun carriages, fascines sunken and half sunken, and all the methods of defence against vertical, direct, ricochet, or oblique fire, were carefully attended to and anxiously learned by the men of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*. Sergeant Carey was at home in his new vocation, and was forever wandering amongst the works, and asking pertinent questions from the engineers. At last, however, we were relieved, and were to take up our quarters at a deserted chateau near the village of Puggy, about five miles from Besançon, where we still pursued our occupation

assisting the *génie*. The officers were still *comme à la guerre*. Their uniform was torn and soiled, and occasionally was not quite *à la militaire*, at least in the dandified opinion of those carpet heroes, the *Garde Nationale*. I remember once having run the gauntlet of *Chefs de Battalion*, colonels and generals, and ultimately succeeded in getting a pass to Besançon, and entered its historic gate in all the *déshabille* of my campaign dress. My tunic was patched and soiled, my *kepi* was battered and dirty, and my trousers were covered with mud stains. I must have cut a sorry figure, and the interest which some members of the *Garde Nationale* took in my costume, caused an occasional suspicion on my part that my clothes were, perhaps, coming to pieces. But it was not so, and I was able to see the town without having recourse to a tailor for assistance. Dr. Macken accompanied me, and he, with philanthropic longing, visited the hospitals, which were crowded with sick and wounded. I, however, went the round of the town, and was interested in hearing the military history of the place, of being told that it was in the neighbourhood Cæsar defeated Ariovistus, that Louis XIV. took the town in 1660, and that it was successfully defended against the Allies in 1814. There were, of course, fussy members of the *Garde Nationale*, the fireside champions of the Republic, who would insist on seeing my papers when they heard my foreign accent. There were, as an equal matter of course, the strutting officers of the same useless body, covered with lace, and treading the earth with an air that would it take Theophile Gautier to do justice to. The divinity of such a form

could only be successfully treated by a master hand. Then there were the neat French girls, dressed with that exquisite taste which one hardly ever sees out of *La Belle France*. But above all there was an excellent dinner at a *café*, which Dr. Macken and myself enjoyed with voracious relish. After all, true enjoyment consists in sudden release from pain. There is no pleasure so exquisitely fine as that which enables us to contrast the two extremes, while enjoying the better—contentment, that parent of delight and physical comfort on the one hand, and famine, frost and misery upon the other.

Besançon, however, was, like all French towns at that period, in mourning. The authorities had donned sackcloth, preached peace, and talked of revenge. The carpet heroes were loud in their protestations of treachery, and even swore that Bourbaki attempted his own life, because he was discovered in the fact of selling his country. While I wandered about the town, I had a thousand speculations to make, and as evening was throwing its giant shadow upon the battlements which capped the hills around me, I made towards the gate, passed out of the town, and took the road for Puyg. I remember it was a glorious day. The Doubs coursed merrily along beside the road I traversed, and on every side the fortress-crowned hills looked defiantly upon the many passages below. It was, indeed, a place worth fighting for, and I returned to our quarters impressed with the assurance that France, with all its faults, was still flowing with milk and honey.

But time passed quickly in our comfortable quarters

at the Chateau at Puggy. Occasionally some misde-meanant from the *Régiment Etranger* was shot in the grey of the morning, and it became quite a study to see how men of various mental culture met their fate. Then, too, the melancholy ordeal of selling the effects of officers that had been killed, caused some painful recollections, and set many a brain wandering over past scenes and past associations. Then came a parting dinner from the officers of the battalion to the officers of *La Compagnie Irlandaise*, all of whom had fortunately pulled through the campaign with whole skins. Then there were two inspections, a change of quarters, and we once more found ourselves near the "Red Farm," and could see the very spot where the last shot was fired. Our new post was at a cross road, and disbanded *Mobiles* and *Franc-tireurs* passed every hour of the day, in groups. They were going home, and sang patriotic chants, by way of individual joy at the fact. They wished to appear sorry, but were really glad. They swore vengeance, and indulged in the telegraphy of the arms, but they were merry all the time, and were evidently picturing the welcome which awaited them at the threshold of their homes. I remember one poor fellow who attracted my attention on one of those occasions. He was a young man, and carried himself with a quiet *hauteur* which commanded respect by its easy force. A simple gold band which ran obliquely across the cuff of his tunic, proclaimed his rank to be that of a sergeant, and as one arm was in a sling, it told its own tale without any varnish. There was something in the bearing of this sergeant that attracted my attention, and as he stood

before me, his attitude and manner forced me to regard him as a man of superior culture. His story, as I afterwards heard from himself, was a simple one, common enough to the sons of France at that date. He was the son of a noble in Alsace. His father's chateau had been bombarded and razed to the ground. His mother died, his only brother was killed, and he was then wending his way to Switzerland, where his heart-broken and ruined parent had taken up his temporary abode. "But we will always be French, *mon Capitaine*," he said, addressing me; "it is impossible that Alsace can be made to accept the government of Germany. We are French in character, in idea, in habit, and above all in sympathy. As for me and my poor old father, we return to Alsace only to dispose of the remnant of our estates, and then we shall start for Algeria, where we shall await the hour of reckoning with the victors of to-day." It was a common enough story of the time, but was rendered doubly interesting by the method of its telling, and the quiet and gentlemanly manner of the sergeant. But days passed on with the usual routine of military duties, and military promenades, and we had on one occasion the poor satisfaction of marching into the village of Bussy, from which the enemy had been induced to retire. The men were once more clean, and had the luxury of indulging in a vigorous application of soap and water every morning. Days passed on in a monotony that became a pleasure, owing to the recent hardships we had passed through. For four months the men had not had a change of uniforms, and it requires no student of entomology to

picture the state of their clothing. But all this was rapidly changing. Needles and thread were everywhere at play, and working became a regular duty, while an occasional inspection of the kits rendered competition in cleanliness a healthy and soldierly pastime. About this time the journals in Besançon sounded our praises, and elevated us upon a kind of chivalrous platform for the admiration of the bourgeoisie of the town. They claimed us as brothers and as friends, said we were fine fellows generally, and swore undying attachment to what they variously called "Catholic Ireland" and "Green Erin."

La Franche Comté is one of the most influential journals in that part of France, and one morning we were flattered by noticing the following paragraph in our favour:—

"Amongst the volunteers who have come from all parts of Europe to place their swords at the service of France, when she was invaded, and her independence threatened, we cannot forget the Irish Company, which formed part of the army of the East. Officers and soldiers, sons of green Erin, they remembered in the hour of our danger the ties of strong sympathy which have for a long time united Ireland and France. Having been the first to come to us, they are the last to leave us, after having borne a brilliant part in the different combats of the East. At Montbelliard they were the last to leave the field of battle. At Bussy they were complimented by General Rebillard. In the name of our poor France, thanks, once more thanks to our Irish brothers, we shall take care faithfully to remember their courage and their devotion."

Other journals were equally complimentary, and showered praises upon our heads with prodigal profusion. But all this had its results. Visitors occasionally enquired for our whereabouts, and demonstrated their friendships in some neighbouring *café*, into which they generally invited the not unwilling soldiers.

In the meantime the peace negotiations were being pushed forward, and the armistice was to extend until the 24th of February. Paris had been occupied by the Germans, and the war indemnity had been settled at 5,000,000,000 francs, or £200,000,000 sterling. This, however, is but a portion of what that disastrous war cost France. The number of "bons" signed by officers for goods requisitioned, must have been something fabulously large. For *La Compagnie Irlandaise* I must have signed "bons" to the tune of many thousand pounds. Every officer commanding a company or a detachment, must have done the same, and the poor peasants and shopkeepers often looked with suspicious dread at the stamped order which compelled them to part with their goods for what to them was a doubtful piece of paper. But they were mistaken in their suspicions. France paid her debts to friends as well as to foes. Belfort capitulated on the 16th of February, and the garrison, reduced from 16,000 to 12,000 men, marched out with full military honours, and took away with them the armaments and the archives of the fortress. The heel of the French Achilles, as Vauban called Belfort, had done its duty nobly, and if the *Intendance* had been equal to the occasion, Belfort would have formed a

base of operations for the army of the East, which might have given a new complexion to the campaign, Belfort opens the road to Paris, overawes Lyons, threatens and neutralizes Strasburg, and turns the entire line of fortresses constructed to guard the frontier. So wrote the great engineer of Louis XIV., and so the experience of the Franco-German war proved it to be. Then there was a further extension of the armistice for two days, and on the 28th March, the preliminaries of peace were agreed to, and the national pride of *La Grande Nation* was trailing in the dust.

Our time was drawing to a close. We were volunteers *pour la durée de la guerre*, but the colonel generously asked us to remain in the service, all ranks holding their position. I declined, and Mr. Cotter was the only one who accepted service. For my own part, I was much pleased at the unanimous determination of the men to return to Ireland. It proved to the French officers that the soldiers of the Irish Company did not go to France as mercenaries. When their work was done they desired to return home, and it was easy to detect that the spirit which evinced itself in the ranks of *La Compagnie Irlandaise* contributed to their elevation in the opinions of the colonel and the officers of the regiment in general.

"We would like to have you with us in Africa, *Capitaine*," said the colonel to me as I informed him of the men's decision, "but I suppose your men are too comfortable at home, to wish to serve in such a country."

"It is not that, *mon Colonel*," I replied, "we Irish

always give our sympathy when France goes to war, but many of these Irish soldiers have professions to follow, and then there is no glory in your African campaign to compensate for its trials and its hardships."

"Ah, *Capitaine*, I fear France will not be able to fight Germany for many a long year to come. Three million and a half of our people taken from us, an enormous indemnity, twice as much in itself as it cost England for the two years war in the Crimea, and then our own debts contracted for the war, our *prestige* gone, our national pride humiliated. Ah, *Capitaine*," continued the old man, visibly effected by the picture he had created; "do not mind the cries of revenge you hear, we are not able for the Germans at present; but," he added, straightening himself in his chair, and rattling the decorations which hung from his soldierly breast, while his eye emitted that genuine fire I had seen it give out more than once under fire; "but who knows, this is an age of complication, and France may wake up still, may wake up still."

"You marched through Prussia as if you were on a promenade, and your eagles were planted under the Lindens before, *mon Colonel*," I replied, "and you may do so again. You have a bead roll of victories before which the triumphs of Germany of to-day must pale. Nations, like families, have their troubles, and each in its turn dictates to its neighbours."

"Very well, *Capitaine*, call to-morrow at nine in the morning, and I shall have all your papers ready, and the next day you can leave for your own country. And," he added, standing up and extending his hand

to me, "may God bless you, and if we ever meet again, I hope it will be under better circumstances, and brighter auspices both for your own country and for mine." I shook the old man's hand, and left him, with mingled emotions of joy and of sorrow, for that fraternity of brotherland, which grows amongst companions in arms, had rendered our Colonel dear to every officer in his command. At last, however, our time was drawing to a close. Day by day preparations were being made to send us home, and on the 26th of March, we received final orders to prepare to leave our quarters on the morrow. Arms were delivered up, accounts settled, books posted, and we were mustered out of the army, carrying with us the good opinion and the kind wishes of every man in the *Régiment Etranger*.

Well "to-morrow" came. I parted with the officers early in the morning, and I remember turning around to wave a salute to the knot of war-worn heroes who stood upon a small knoll behind me, where they had congregated to bid me adieu; and I heard the familiar phrase of my late companions in arms for the last time calling out in general chorus as they waved their kepis above their heads, "*Bonne chance, Capitaine, bonne chance.*" I must confess to a feeling of sadness upon the occasion, and I wended my way along the beautiful valley of the Doubs, where the connecting canal of the Rhine and Rhone join in mutual embrace. I gave way to speculation, and drew melancholy pictures of the past on the one hand, and joyous anticipations of the future on the other. At last my face was towards home, sweet, sweet home. That love of

strange attractive force which guides the feelings in its narrow channel, soon claimed and obtained entire possession over my mind, and I gave way to the coming happiness which anticipation brought upon its hopeful passage.

I reached Besançon about noon. Mr. McAleve was to follow with the company the next morning, while I saw the *Intendance*, and tried to make preparation for our conveyance by rail if possible. No conveyance was to be had for love or money. Here was another dilemma. There were about twenty sick, and it was impossible that they could march to Dôle or Dijon, a distance of eighty kilometres. I spent two days vainly endeavouring to induce the authorities to make some effort to enable me to keep the company intact; but it was all in vain. The General appeared to have an electric battery at the end of his feet and hands when I made the request, and declared that it was "impossible—impossible," while he demonstrated his words by shrugging his shoulders, extending his hands, arching his eyebrows, and indulging in theatrical grimaces that would do justice to a circus clown. The *Intendance* was, indeed, civil; he even took pains to try and see us provided for. He gave me an order to the station-master, to try and have our sick conveyed by rail, but all was useless, and the sick had to be left behind.

I think it was on the 30th of March we left Besançon for Dijon. The reviving sun of Spring made our route pleasant enough, and we trudged along in our own time. The villages along our way were occupied by German troops, and I had a few opportunities of

inspecting the drill and bearing of the soldiers of the Vaterland. It was marvellous to mark their precision on parade, as it was magnificent to observe their promptitude and soldierly bearing. Their movements were as mechanically true as the beating of a chronometer. Accustomed as I had been to drill with some of the crack regiments in the English service, I never saw anything so precise in all its minutest details, as the movement of a Prussian regiment on parade. More than once I saw several thousand men drawn up in columns of companies, and in the manual and platoon the entire mass moved as if they were automats, working by the electric influence of the officers in command. Not a boot was placed one inch beyond another, nor a rifle was a fraction out of its direct angle. To me it appeared surprising that such perfection could be attained. I had indeed tried, and I think succeeded, in making *La Compagnie Irlandaise* as well drilled as any company in the *Régiment Etranger*. They marched as well, manœuvred as well, and went through their formations, in general, with as much regularity and order as their French companions in arms. I took a natural pride in seeing them as good a company as any in the regiment, and was more than a dozen times complimented by French officers on the fact. But they bore but a poor comparison to the clock-like precision of the German troops. Without being stiff or rigid, still the Germans were perfect in their movements, and inspired me with a degree of respect, which I confess never to have experienced when looking at the best troops of the French line. The kits of the Germans were well

provided, and their comfortable boots, warm clothing, well filled haversacks, wonderful organization, and general healthy appearance, told the plain unvarnished tale of their successes.

Everywhere traces of the war were evident. Rude crosses marked the scene of many a combat, where Frank and Teuton closed in the embrace of death. Here and there some companion of the slain had carved the name or names of the occupants of the earth beneath, upon the wooden monuments, while rude, and sometimes creditable epitaphs, told the simple story of a lifetime. All the villages and towns along our route were occupied by the Germans, little *petite-postes* dotted the country at every point likely to afford shelter and protection to the invaders. To men wearing the uniform of the French regular army, both officers and soldiers of the enemy, were marked in their respect, and I well remember the surprise it caused me when marching along a road, cut into deep furrows by the numerous waggons that had passed over it, and meeting three Saxon officers who were promenading quietly before their quarters, they saluted me with military and, indeed, courteous promptitude, which I endeavoured as courteously to return. Victors, however, can afford to be civil, and they were even so to the privates and non-commissioned officers of the regular army. To the *Mobiles* and *Franc-tireurs*, however, there was no such respect shewn, and yet I remember when passing through Dôle, a town of 4,000 inhabitants, romantically situated in a narrow rocky gorge, seeing the band of a Prussian regiment turn from their direct front, and play for a passing regi-

ment of *Mobiles* as they marched *sans armes* into the town. Here, too, I had a little *rencontre* with the Prussian guard. I had picked up an old Prussian gun at Montbelliard, and wished to take it to Ireland as a *souvenir* of the war. It was one of the old pattern, and had in all probability seen service in the war of 1866. It was a heavy, cumbersome, long, unwieldy weapon. It was nearly double the weight of a Chasse-pôt, and the escape of gas from the breech was so great that provision was made on the stock, by its peculiar formation, to rest on the thigh, from which position the gun was often fired. I found it, too, a convenient way for punishing *en route*. There are always some misdemeanant men in a company, and "carrying the field-piece" became a recognized means of punishment on the line of march. When I entered Dôle, the patrol demanded the gun, and against all my remonstrance took it and the man who carried it to the guard room. A crowd collected, the townspeople became excited, a row appeared to be brewing, when again I had an opportunity of witnessing the promptitude of the Prussian military system. In one minute every post in the town was under arms, and the spiked helmets of the German troops inspired a feeling of awe, which subdued the effervescent outburst of the bourgeoisie, and at once threw oil on the troubled waters. However, I succeeded in bringing the gun with me.

"It is contrary to regulations, *Capitaine*," said the captain of the guard, "we are not to allow any guns through our lines; and you know," he said almost apologetically, "that orders *must* be obeyed." I, of

course, acquiesced in this determination to carry out his instructions to the letter, but on pointing out an injury the gun had received which rendered it useless as a firearm, I succeeded in setting at rest his troubled spirit, and was allowed to bring my trophy along with me, the Prussian, however, merely asking me for my name and the regiment to which I belonged, as a guarantee, and then with courteous salutation bidding me "*bon voyage*." If I am to confine myself to personal experience, I must confess I found the Germans both courteous and civil, and conducting themselves towards the inhabitants with dignified and soldierly reserve. I have no doubt but cases of individual hardships did occur; I have no doubt but ruffians committed outrage, and robbers plundered property, when removed from the surveillance of their officers, but I did not see it, nor do I think, with a few notorious exceptions, that the conduct of the German troops in France, was more severe than would be the conduct of a French army in Germany. Napoleon the Great's march through the Vaterland was not unmarked by that severity, which is to a great extent, necessary in a country fanatically hostile to the invading force. The first duty of a General is to protect the lives of his own men, and in France this was impossible without resorting to measures which, with a few disgraceful exceptions, I think were justifiable. But it was Germans, Germans everywhere. Dijon, with all its old associations, where the Dukes of Burgundy lorded over the adjacent country, was full of the enemy; all along the road to Paris villages were ruined, every house appeared to be crenellated,

while the tottering walls of many a homestead, which I could see from out the window of the railway carriage, told of ruin and of woe. For the time being the Germans lorded it with erect heads yet calm demeanour. There were few swaggerers, and it was only when I arrived in Paris, that I saw the spirit of rowdyism, when I was surrounded and taken prisoner by a Communist guard, first as a German spy, and then charged with the obnoxious crime of being an officer of the *Armée Régulière*. The gallant champions of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, thought my uniform a matter of suspicion, and brought me a prisoner before the officer of the guard, who hesitated to dispose of me, and sent me on to the *Commandant*. He, too, gave me a further promenade, and I was sent under recruited escort to the general in command of the district, and was ushered into his august presence with little ceremony, and with less respect. I regret I forget this fellow's name, or that I cannot put my hand upon the official *laissez passer* which he ultimately gave me. He was not, however, a *distingué* looking individual. His subordinates treated him with a familiarity which was generally communistic in its way. However, he overhauled my papers, and when satisfied with my character, generously invited me to accept service under his filthy-looking rag.

"I will give you command of a regiment this very day, *Capitaine*," he urged, moving towards the chimneypiece, on which several black bottles labeled "cognac" were standing in quiet anticipation of having their contents emptied by the General and his staff. No doubt he wished to soften my obdurate

heart, as he invited me to some of the brandy and helped himself after a fashion I had very seldom seen practised in France—a flowing bumper.

“It is not my affair,” I replied; “against the Germans I may be again at the service of France, but a foreigner has no right to interfere in the domestic affairs of another nation.”

“Ah, you are mistaken, *Capitaine*,” replied the General, as I hit upon one of the favourite arguments of the heroes of the Commune. “Ours is the cause of humanity,” he continued, as he helped himself to convenient sips at the contents of the glass, “wishing to establish a fraternity of nations to elevate the poor, and to curtail the power of the rich. Law, sir, should protect the weak, the strong can generally protect themselves. Legislation in the past has been made by one section of society, to the discomfiture and degradation of the other. Come,” he continued, extending his hand towards me, “come and join us, and be one of the regenerators of the human race.” But it was no use, and my unsympathetic nature could not appreciate the utopia the ardent brain of the General, assisted by ardent spirits, had conjured up. At last he gave me a *laissez passer*, and even provided an escort to see me safe at the station, giving me, however, a parting instruction to quit Paris at once. I did so! It was not safe for any one wearing the uniform of the *Armée Régulière* to be found strolling about the streets, and I took the first train for Havre.

At Havre, there was, as usual in all French towns at that period, the hum of “*encore la guerre*.” Revenge appeared to have entered the hearts of all the people

in the town. The soldiers alone were silent, and more than once I was forced to notice the contemptuous sneer that passed over the face of some man, who bore the traces of the campaign upon his person, when listening to the flippant bombast of a bourgeois, or a National Guardsman. In the *cafés*, in the streets, in the theatres, it was all the same; the cry of "*encore la guerre*," was repeated everywhere. Even the *Mobiles* occasionally indulged in the prediction. Men, whose term of service had been made up behind the fortifications, were above all others, the most uncompromising heroes, the most determined advocates for another war. The fire-side heroes of the Republic—the darlings of the Commune, were one and all loud in their determination, to see the issue out with the German "hordes," at no distant date. These men, however, knew little of French military organization, and they knew less of German administrative power. But I found that each political party blamed every other party with being the cause of the disasters. The Legitimists "saw it all from the commencement." "It was impossible that the Imperialists could succeed." The exit of the Emperor was, in their opinion, a just *dénoûment* to his entry. Sedan was the retribution for the *coup-d'état*. But *Henri Cinq*, the legitimate claimant to the throne of his ancestors, would restore the faded honours of France, and once more burnish her worn and battered armour. So argued the Legitimists, who generally accompanied their opinion by a virtuous denunciation of everything that was not tempered to their political tastes. The Republicans were even more boisterous. They were merely biding

their time, just waiting to consolidate their policy, and then the manhood of the nation would settle accounts with the "barbarians" of the North. When the political structure of "not I the king, but we the people," was once fairly upon its legs, the Republicans were to seriously set about another war, and the result would assuredly be to march across the Rhine, to the victorious shout of "*à Berlin, à Berlin.*" But this was all swagger. It was the effort of a foolish bravoism, which would not acknowledge itself worsted. "No matter from what cause, France has been beaten," Marsha MacMahon said to me months afterwards, when I had the honour of an interview with the illustrious chief; he acknowledged openly and fairly, that France had been humiliated, and he is too much the soldier, too open and too chivalrous, not to candidly admit what is patent to the whole world. But the gentlemen of the garrison towns would scarcely admit the fact. It was a mere temporary depression, in their opinion, and a few months would make matters right again. To men unmoved by prejudices, even Hope appeared to have fled from France, for military, social, and political life, were in a state of chaos.

It was refreshing, indeed, amongst the crowd of swaggering bullies, to meet an occasional soldier, men who had seen service in the field, amidst the frost, the famine, and the hardships of a mid-winter campaign, and to hear *them* speak in terms of immeasurable disgust of the *bravache* gentry with whom they came into contact. Even the Garabaldini were not free from the braggart spirit of the day. They contrasted most

unfavourably with the unassuming *piou-piou* of the French line. I met one of their captains in Havre, who, if all his words were to be accredited, had performed prodigies of valour. He told such stories of hairbreadth escapes by flood and field that I was induced to believe that the toga of Jack Falstaff had fallen upon his shoulders. "Garabaldians never run, sir" he said to me, with the air of a Don Quixote, while he strutted about with measured strides and a swaggering gait. Meanwhile the Government generously gave each man a month's pay and a free pass to his destination. The Irish soldiers had already departed for Dublin, *via* Liverpool, and on the 6th of April I left Havre, *via* Southampton, for London. The distant lights of *La Belle France* faded in the gloom as we spun on across the channel, and more than once I conjured up many happy associations which had sprung into existence during my six months' campaign in the country. Yes, France is the premier country of the world. With all her faults she has her virtues. Monarchy has not made her sycophantic; Imperialism has not made her unchivalrous; nor has Republicanism made her uncourteous. Where will you meet with the easy courtesy, the refined tone, the generous impulse, the chivalrous conduct, which is so universal in France. Nor do I believe that France was the aggressor in that disastrous war. She was not the aggressor when Denmark was assailed and dismembered by those "peaceful Germans." She was not the aggressor when those "peaceful Germans" planned and worked out the campaign of 1866 against Austria, and which resulted

in the subjugation of the Union States of Germany. She was not the aggressor when Prussia forced the South German States to accept a military convention, which was secretly convened in contravention to the articles of the Treaty of Prague. France was not the aggressor when those "peaceful Germans" set at nought the same treaty with reference to the Danish population of Holland. She was not the aggressor when Bismarck, in conspiracy with Prim, sought the elevation to the Spanish throne of a scion of the house of Hohenzollern. The sin of France has ever been that she was, and is, too chivalrous. In her the oppressed nationalities of the world have ever found a champion. Instinctively she leans to the weak. Her virtues more than counterbalance her faults. France has ever been the pioneer of civilization in Europe, the home of sages, and the cradle of chivalry. To-day, the kingly grace of the court of Louis XIV. sits as easily upon the republican *ouvrier* as it does upon the coroneted brows of the long line of *noblesse* who look at you out of their gilded frames on the walls of the picture gallery in Versailles. When France found herself thrown from the pinnacle of military fame, pushed from the pedestal of her greatness into the mire of degeneracy, it was natural that some burst of indignation and threats of revenge should sweep like an avalanche over the country. At such a time all due allowance must be made for a nation of chivalrous men. But take her all in all and nowhere will you find that courteous civility which is equally perceptible beneath the *blouse* of a labourer or

the fine cloth of a *homme distingué* whose home is France.

From Havre to London, thence to Dublin, only took a couple of days. The people expected our arrival, and as the boat approached the wharf, I saw flags fluttering in the morning air, and I heard the strains of joyous music floating on the breeze. We approached still nearer, and a joyous Irish cheer echoed from the crowds of friends who thronged the quay. Again and again the welcome was repeated; again and again we acknowledged the friendly salutations, and in a few minutes I once more stood upon the soil of my native land.

NOMINAL ROLL
OF
THE IRISH COMPANY.

TAKEN AT THE "RED FARM," ON THE 24TH JANUARY, 1871.

NO.	RANK AND NAME.	REMARKS.
*1	Captain M. W. Kirwan	Duty—wounded first day at Montbelliard.
1	Lieutenant F. M'Alevey	Duty—wounded second day at Montbelliard.
2	" B. Cotter	Duty.
1	1st Class Assist.-Surgeon R. Macken	Duty.
1	Sergeant-Major Albert Dunsford.	Duty—wounded first day at Montbelliard.
*2	Fourrier-Sergeant Henry M'Crossin	Ambulance.
*3	Sergeant Terence Byrne	Duty.
*4	" Frank Byrne	Duty.
*5	" M. H. Carey	Duty.
†6	" Anthony Donnellan	Wounded second day at Montbelliard—missing second day on the retreat
7	" Patrick Corr	Duty.
8	" Henri Amaud	Died in hospital from the effects of wounds received on the second day at Montbelliard.
9	" G. Mazaine	Shot at St. Florent.
10	Fourrier-Caporal W. D. Carmichael	Duty.
11	Caporal Andrew O'Reilly	Ambulance.
12	" Geo. O'Shaughnessy	In hospital—wounded second day at Montbelliard

APPENDIX.

Nominal Roll of the Irish Company, taken at the Red Farm, Jan. 24, 1871.

NO.	RANK AND NAME.	REMARKS.
13	Caporal Hiliary M'Dermott	Duty.
14	" Patrick Gorman	Duty.
15	" L. Mahony	Duty—wounded first day at Montbelliard.
16	" Michael Galvin	Duty.
17	" Daniel M'Evoy	Duty.
*18	" Paul Cullen	Duty—wounded first day at Montbelliard.
19	" Thomas Delany	Duty.
20	" G. Malouski	Shot second day at Montbelliard.
21	Soldat Michael Bain	Duty.
22	" Thomas Bannon	Hospital (frostbitten).
23	" James Barry	Hospital.
24	" Joseph Begley	Reported missing second day at Montbelliard, turned up in Switzerland
25	" James Boulger	Duty.
26	" James K. Bourke	Duty.
27	" Patrick Boyle	Duty.
28	" Philip Branagan	Duty.
29	" Patrick Brien	Duty.
30	" Laurence Breen	Died at Bourges (small-pox).
31	" C. B. Brennan	Shot at Orleans.
32	" Andrew Caldwell	Duty.
33	" John Carey	Duty.
34	" John Claffey	Duty.
35	" James Clinch	Hospital (small-pox).
36	" Andrew Carroll	Shot first morning of the retreat.
37	" Wm. J. Clinton	Hospital.
38	" George Coleman	Duty.
39	" Timothy Conroy	Ambulance—wounded at Montbelliard, second day.
40	" John Conway	Duty.
41	" Michael Coyne	Hospital (wounded).

APPENDIX.

Nominal Roll of the Irish Company, taken at the Red Farm, Jan. 24, 1871.

NO.	RANK AND NAME.	REMARKS.
42	Soldat John Cronin	Ambulance (frostbitten).
43	" Philip C. Crute	Shot second day at Montbelliard.
44	" Kearn Delany	Duty.
45	" Bernard Dullaghan	Duty.
46	" Wm. J. Dwyer	In hospital—wounded third day at Montbelliard
47	" James Eustace	Hospital (small-pox).
48	" Matthew French	Reported shot third day at Montbelliard.
49	" John Foran	Staff employ (Tours).
50	" Daniel Gilfedder	Duty.
51	" George Graham	Duty.
52	" William Grace	Duty.
53	" Peter Griffin	Duty.
54	" Edward Hayden	Ambulance (frostbitten).
55	" Gerald Howard	Missing second day at Montbelliard — turned up in Switzerland.
56	" Denis Hayes	Duty.
57	" William Hoey	Duty.
58	" James Hyland	Duty.
59	" William Kelley	Missing second day at Montbelliard.
60	" George Kennedy	do.
61	" Thomas Knowles	Duty.
62	" Timothy Larkin	Duty.
63	" Michael Lyman	Duty.
64	" James Madden	Hospital (frostbitten).
65	" George Malone	Missing — wounded third day at Montbelliard.
66	" Patrick Manning	Duty.
67	" Timothy Marks	Wounded — second day at Bussy
68	" Thomas Marum	Duty.
69	" John Meehan	Hospital (wounded).
70	" William Millar	Missing — reported shot second day at Montbelliard.

APPENDIX.

Nominal Roll of the Irish Company, taken at the Red Farm, Jan. 24, 1871.

NO.	RANK AND NAME.	REMARKS.
71	Soldat Owen Muldoon	Duty.
72	" John Myers	In hospital (frostbitten).
73	" Gerald Nolan	Duty.
74	" Charles Mordall	Missing second day at Montbelliard.
75	" Francis O'Brien	Missing first day at Montbelliard.
76	" John O'Brien	do.
77	" Richard O'Brien	Duty.
78	" Timothy O'Connor	Duty.
79	" E. O'Keefe	Hospital.
80	" C. O'Doherty	Duty.
81	" E. J. O'Hanlon	Missing second day.
82	" James O'Neill	do.
83	" Jeremiah O'Neill	Duty.
84	" Patrick O'Reilly	Duty.
85	" George Pope	Hospital, wounded at Bussy
86	" James Quinn	Duty—wounded.
87	" D. Scanlan	Reported shot second day at Montbelliard.
88	" Patrick Sheehan	Duty.
89	" James Smith	Ambulance.
90	" James Sutcliffe	Duty.
91	" James Walsh	Duty.
92	" A. Underwood	Shot at St. Florent.
93	" John Malony	Hospital.
94	" Wm. R. Haughton	Duty.
95	" James M'Kenna	Duty.
96	" M. O'Toole.	Duty.

NOTE.—The names marked with an asterisk (*) were recommended by the Colonel of the Foreign Legion to receive the Legion of Honour, and those with a † to receive the *Medal Militaire*.

THE END.